



# Durham E-Theses

---

## *A literary-rhetorical reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians.*

Stamps, Dennis Lee

### How to cite:

---

Stamps, Dennis Lee (1994) *A literary-rhetorical reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians.*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/960/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

## ABSTRACT

Author: Dennis L. Stamps

Title: *A Literary-Rhetorical Reading of the Opening and Closing of 1 Corinthians*

This study is an experiment in reading an ancient letter within the Christian letter tradition, or more specifically, the Pauline epistolary tradition. It is an attempt to read the first letter from Paul to the church at Corinth, a letter written in about 55 CE. Instead of pursuing the traditional historical-critical concerns, this study uses literary and modern rhetorical theory to assess the effect of the final form of the text upon the epistolary situation.

In literary terms, this study examines how the text inscribes the sender/author, the recipients/audience, and the rhetorical situation as literary presentations, using in particular the literary concepts of the implied author and the implied reader. These literary presentations are then evaluated in terms of how they contribute to the rhetorical dynamic of the letter in which the sender and recipient(s) meet via the letter text.

In addition, the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians is evaluated in relation to its literary context. Thus, this study surveys the epistolary practice, specifically the opening and closing conventions, of Greek letters and Jewish letters, and of the Pauline epistolary tradition. Against these epistolary traditions the opening (1 Cor. 1.1-9) and closing (1 Cor. 16.19-24) of 1 Corinthians are compared and contrasted to determine what is conventional and what is distinctive.

Furthermore, the letter opening and closing and the argument of the letter as a whole are read to explore the way in which the rhetorical situation (the story of the relationship between the letter parties which governs the letter) is entextualized in the letter. This literary presentation of the rhetorical situation is evaluated to determine the way in which it shapes or controls, even constructs, the epistolary situation for the readers.

A LITERARY-RHETORICAL READING OF THE OPENING  
AND CLOSING OF 1 CORINTHIANS

BY

DENNIS LEE STAMPS

A THESIS SUBMITTED

FOR THE DEGREE

OF

Ph.D.

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

APRIL, 1994

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.  
No quotation from it should be published without  
his prior written consent and information derived  
from it should be acknowledged.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF CONTENT.....	7
STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT.....	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	9
ABBREVIATIONS AND QUOTATIONS.....	10
INTRODUCTION.....	11
1. The Thesis Problem and Proposal.....	11
2. Previous Research on the Pauline Opening and Closing.....	18
2.1. The Study of the Pauline Epistolary Tradition.....	19
2.2. Rhetorical Critical Studies of Paul's Letters.....	24
2.3. Literary Approaches to Pauline Letters.....	30
3. The Thesis Plan and Procedure.....	34
Chapter 1	
A LITERARY-RHETORICAL APPROACH TO READING THE OPENING	
AND CLOSING OF 1 CORINTHIANS.....	37
1. Introduction.....	37
2. The Reading Act as a Communication Event.....	40
2.1. The Dialectical Theory of Reading.....	41
2.2. Reading and Roman Jakobson's Communication Model.....	46
3. Rhetoric and the Reading of Scripture.....	54
3.1. Recent Developments in Rhetorical Criticism.....	56
3.2. An Analysis of the Interpretive Goals of	
Rhetorical-Critical Approaches to the New Testament.....	61
3.3. A Proposal for a Rhetorical-Critical Approach to	
the New Testament.....	65
3.3.1. The Nature and Scope of Rhetoric in Texts.....	66
3.3.2. Rhetorical-Critical Interpretive	
Strategies.....	70
3.3.3. Rhetoric and the Reading Process.....	74
3.4. A Rhetorical Approach to 1 Corinthians.....	77
4. The Literary Dimension.....	79
4.1. The Literary Dimension of Textuality.....	80
4.1.1. The Literary Context: The Literary	
Tradition.....	80
4.1.2. The Literary Context: The Text Itself.....	82
4.1.3. The Literary Components: The Implied	
Author, the Implied Reader, and	
the Literary Situation.....	83
4.1.3.1. The Implied Author.....	84
4.1.3.2. The Implied Reader.....	86
4.1.3.3. The Literary Situation.....	89
4.2. The Literary Dimensions of the Opening and	
Closing of 1 Corinthians.....	90
4.2.1. The Literary Tradition as a Literary	
Context.....	91
4.2.2. The Text as Its Own Context.....	92
4.2.3. The Implied Author and the Implied Reader	
in 1 Corinthians.....	93
4.2.4. The Literary Situation for 1 Corinthians.....	95
4.3. The Literary Perspective and the Historicity of	
the Text.....	97
5. The Orality of 1 Corinthians as a Literary	
and Historical Context.....	99



6. Conclusion: A Literary-Rhetorical Approach to the Opening and Closing of 1 Corinthians.....	101
---	-----

## Chapter 2

### THE ANCIENT LETTER TRADITION IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD AND THE OPENING AND CLOSING CONVENTIONS

IN THE EPISTOLARY LITERATURE.....	104
1. Introduction.....	104
2. The Development of Letter Writing in the Greco-Roman World.....	107
3. Greek Epistolary Literature and Conventions.....	111
3.1. Sources.....	114
3.2. The Classification of Greek Epistolary Literature.....	117
3.2.1. Deissmann's Classification of Greek Papyrus Literature.....	118
3.2.2. Classification Based on Epistolary Form.....	120
3.2.3. Classification According to Function.....	123
3.3. The Social Context for Greek Letters.....	127
3.3.1. Social Networks and the Greek Letter.....	130
3.3.2. The Cultural Practicalities of Letter Writing.....	134
3.4. Greek Epistolary Literature and the Rhetorical Tradition.....	139
3.5. The Greek Letter Form.....	145
3.5.1. The Basic Form of the Greek Letter.....	146
3.5.2. Private Documentary Letters.....	148
3.5.2.1. Letter Opening.....	148
3.5.2.2. Letter-Body.....	151
3.5.2.3. Letter Closing.....	155
3.5.2.4. Summary.....	158
3.5.3. The Official Letter.....	159
3.5.4. Summary.....	162
4. Hebrew Epistolary Literature.....	163
5. The General Purposes and Communication Dynamics of Ancient Letters.....	171
5.1. Ancient Theories of Letter Writing.....	172
5.1.1. Definitions of a Letter.....	173
5.1.2. The Impact of Letter Writing Theory on the Practice of Letter Writing.....	176
5.2. The Dynamics of Letter Writing in the Ancient World.....	177
5.2.1. Definitions of Ancient Letters by Recent Scholars.....	177
5.2.2. The Communication Dynamics of Ancient Letter Writing.....	182
6. Conclusion.....	186

## Chapter 3

### THE EPISTOLARY OPENING AND CLOSING IN THE PAULINE LETTER TRADITION.....

1. Introduction.....	188
2. The Pauline Letter Form.....	189
2.1. The Letter Opening.....	190
2.1.1. The Sender and Co-Sender(s).....	190
2.1.2. The Recipients.....	194
2.1.3. The Greeting.....	195
2.1.4. Summary.....	200
2.2. The Thanksgiving.....	201
2.2.1. The Form of the Thanksgiving.....	202
2.2.2. Relationship to Greek and Jewish Epistolary Tradition.....	206
2.2.3. The Function of the Thanksgiving.....	210
2.3. Letter Closing.....	215
2.3.1. Structure of the Letter Closing.....	217
2.3.2. Greetings.....	219
2.3.3. Closing Benediction.....	225
2.3.4. Other Closing Conventions.....	226
2.3.4.1. Peace Wish.....	227
2.3.4.2. Holy Kiss Formula.....	229
2.3.4.3. Apostolic Command.....	231



2.3.4.4. Signature Statement.....	232
2.3.5. Summary.....	234
3. The Epistolary Situation and the Communication Dynamics of the Pauline Letter.....	235
3.1. The Epistolary Situation for the Pauline Letter.....	235
3.1.1. Pauline Letters as Letters of Instruction.....	236
3.1.2. The Liturgical Function of Pauline Letters.....	241
3.2. The Communication Dynamics of the Pauline Letter.....	242
3.2.1. The Oral Nature of Pauline Letters.....	243
3.2.2. The Rhetorical Nature of Pauline Letters.....	246
4. Conclusion.....	249
Chapter 4	
THE RHETORIC OF THE LETTER OPENING IN 1 CORINTHIANS 1.1-9.....	252
1. Introduction.....	252
2. The Epistolary Prescript of 1 Corinthians 1.1-3.....	255
2.1. Sender.....	255
2.1.1. The Audience Perspective.....	255
2.1.2. The Authorial Perspective.....	262
2.2. Addressees.....	266
2.2.1. The Audience Perspective.....	266
2.2.2. The Authorial Perspective.....	276
2.3. Greeting.....	285
2.3.1. The Audience Perspective.....	285
2.3.2. The Authorial Perspective.....	289
2.4. Summary.....	290
3. The Epistolary Thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians 1.4-9.....	292
3.1. The Audience Perspective.....	292
3.1.1. The Spiritual and Relational Premises.....	292
3.1.2. The Rhetorical Logic or Argument.....	300
3.1.3. Summary.....	309
3.2. The Authorial Perspective.....	310
3.2.1. Differences from other Pauline Thanksgivings.....	310
3.2.2. The Thanksgiving as an Introduction.....	315
3.2.3. The Authorial Identity Presented in the Thanksgiving.....	319
3.3. Summary.....	322
4. Conclusion.....	323
Chapter 5	
THE RHETORIC OF THE LETTER CLOSING: 1 CORINTHIANS 16.19-24.....	326
1. Introduction.....	326
2. The Closing Greetings: 16.19-20.....	329
2.1. The Secondary Greetings.....	330
2.1.1. The Authorial Perspective.....	331
2.1.2. The Audience Perspective.....	335
2.2. The Holy Kiss Greeting Formula.....	340
2.2.1. The Authorial Perspective.....	340
2.2.2. The Audience Perspective.....	342
2.3. Summary.....	343
3. The Signature Statement: 16.21-22.....	344
3.1. The Signature Greeting.....	345
3.1.1. The Authorial Perspective.....	346
3.1.2. The Audience Perspective.....	352
3.2. The Concluding Injunction.....	354
3.2.1. The Authorial Perspective.....	356
3.2.2. The Audience Perspective.....	368
3.3. Summary.....	374
4. The Closing Benedictions: 16.23-24.....	376
4.1. The Grace Benediction.....	376
4.1.1. The Authorial Perspective.....	377
4.1.2. The Audience Perspective.....	379
4.2. The Personal Love Blessing.....	379
4.2.1. The Authorial Perspective.....	380
4.2.2. The Audience Perspective.....	382
4.3. Summary.....	384
5. Conclusion.....	385

## Chapter Six

## THE RHETORICAL SITUATION AS ENTEXTUALIZED IN THE LETTER,

## 1 CORINTHIANS: A LITERARY-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE

RHETORICAL SITUATION.....	388
1. Introduction.....	388
2. Traditional Reconstructions of the Rhetorical or Epistolary Situation.....	390
2.1. Historical-Critical Approaches to the Situation.....	390
2.2. Classical Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetorical Situation.....	397
2.3. Summary.....	406
3. A Literary-Rhetorical Analysis of the Situation in 1 Corinthians.....	407
3.1. Isolating the Literary-Rhetorical Situation in 1 Corinthians.....	409
3.2. A Plot Analysis of the Literary-Rhetorical Situation in 1 Corinthians.....	413
3.2.1. The Chronological Order.....	413
3.2.2. The Textual Order.....	429
3.3. The Relationship of the Letter Opening and Closing to the Literary-Rhetorical Situation.....	440
4. The Rhetorical Effect of the Inscribed Rhetorical Situation.....	442
4.1. The Rhetorical Effect of the Literary-Rhetorical Situation in the Letter-Text: The Chronological Order.....	443
4.1.1. The Authorial Self-Presentation in the Literary-Rhetorical Situation.....	443
4.1.2. The Textual Presentation of the Audience in the Literary-Rhetorical Situation.....	449
4.2. The Rhetorical Effect of the Literary-Rhetorical Situation within the Topical Discussions: The Textual Order.....	451
5. Conclusion.....	460
CONCLUSION.....	463
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	469

## DECLARATION OF CONTENT

No material contained in this thesis has been submitted previously for a degree in this or any other university.

SIGNED:



---

Dennis Lee Stamps

Date: 9 June 1994



## STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is only proper to express appreciation where appreciation is due. First of all, I want to thank my supervisors, Prof. J.D.G. Dunn and the Revd. Dr. David Jasper. Their long-suffering patience and immeasurable assistance in bringing this project to completion is greatly appreciated. Prof. Stanley E. Porter, as a friend and colleague, saved me from innumerable errors, editorially and substantively, by his insightful assistance at every level along the way.

Secondly, I wish to thank those who have provided financial assistance: (1) the Department of Theology in the University of Durham for the Post-Graduate Scholarship in Theology for Overseas Students, (2) Tyndale House for the Research Grants, (3) the Church of England, specifically the Diocese of Birmingham and the Diocese of Durham, and (4) family and friends who gave many 'gifts'.

Thirdly, I want to thank my family and friends (of whom it would be inappropriate to name individually) for their unflagging encouragement and support. Special thanks to the Revd. Hayward Osborne and the parishioners of St. Mary's Moseley, Birmingham, who understood why the curate was not always available while he finished his thesis. Words are inadequate to say thank-you to my wife, Helen, and my three children, Jeffrey, Jennifer and Michael for never giving up and always being there.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND QUOTATIONS

All abbreviations of biblical, apocryphal, intertestamental, rabbinic books, professional periodicals and serials are in accordance with the professional style and recommendation of the Society of Biblical Literature set down in the Journal of Biblical Literature's, 'Instruction for Contributors' (JBL 107 (1988), pp. 579-96).

The Greek New Testament is cited from the Novum Testamentum Graece, the Nestle-Aland 26th edition. All translations are my own, often in consultation with a broad selection of other English translations, except if otherwise noted.

References to classical texts follow common practice. Citations of classical texts are from the text and translation of the Loeb Classical Library editions except if otherwise noted.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. The Thesis Problem and Proposal

What is a letter? How does it communicate? How does the letter as a text help to create the context in which the letter is read and understood? These are not easy questions to answer in spite of the familiarity most people have with letters--people write or read letters almost everyday. And though the letter is a familiar and common form of communication, it is not, however, a simple form of communication.<sup>1</sup> Letters, in every age, work on the basis of convention.<sup>2</sup> Yet within that frame of convention, there is great liberty for the letter writer to creatively adapt convention and express the individual message the letter communicates. It follows then that one of the interpretative issues with respect to a particular letter is assessing the significance of the creative adaptation of

---

<sup>1</sup>P. Violi, 'Letters', in Discourse and Literature, Critical Theory, 3, ed. T.A. van Dijk (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1985), pp. 149-67, provides an analysis of the communication dynamics of letters. See also, N.R. Petersen, Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), pp. 53-65.

<sup>2</sup>On the concept of literary convention, see J. Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 114-18, passim. On convention as an aspect of communication, see J. Habermas, 'On Systematically Distorted Communication', in Hermeneutical Inquiry, Vol. 2: The Interpretation of Existence, American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion, 44, ed. D.E. Klemm (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 209-19, and idem, 'Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence', in Hermeneutical Inquiry, pp. 221-34.



convention for the specific epistolary situation of each letter.

Addressing and attempting to answer some of the issues and questions noted above is also important for understanding the letters in the New Testament.

Furthermore, when reading a New Testament letter a modern reader is faced with the additional issue of that ancient letter being written in a style and convention particular to its cultural and literary context.

This study is an experiment in reading one such ancient letter within the Christian letter tradition, or more specifically, the Pauline epistolary tradition.<sup>3</sup> It is an attempt to read the letter from Paul (and Sosthenes) to the church at Corinth, a letter written some 1940 years ago, in about 55 CE.<sup>4</sup> This study is particularly interested in reading this letter in order to evaluate the literary-rhetorical effect created by the creative adaptation of common epistolary convention found in the letter's opening and closing.

---

<sup>3</sup>On the relationship between the Christian letter tradition and the Pauline epistolary tradition, see J.L. White, 'Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition', CBO 45 (1983), pp. 433-44, and idem, 'New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography' in ANRW II. 25.2, ed. H. Temporini and W. Hasse (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 1730-56; W. Doty, Letters in Primitive Christianity, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 17-47.

<sup>4</sup>The traditional introductory matters with respect to 1 Corinthians are assumed for this study, see W.G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, rev. ed., trans. H.C. Kee (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), pp. 269-79; also G.D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 1-20.

In order to evaluate the literary-rhetorical effect of the opening and closing conventions of 1 Corinthians, one needs to answer several questions. First, what does one mean by the literary-rhetorical effect? Second, what was the epistolary practice which governed the opening and closing of letters in the ancient Greco-Roman world? Third, how does the Pauline letter tradition reflect common epistolary practice and how does it creatively change or modify it? Fourth, with regard to the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, how does it reflect common epistolary practice and how is it distinctive with respect both to letter writing traditions in the hellenistic world and to Pauline practice? More importantly, after identifying the conventional and distinctive features of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, what is the literary and rhetorical effect of these changes or modifications upon the communication event this letter seeks to produce? Furthermore, if every letter represents a particular epistolary situation, how does the opening and closing and the literary entextualization of the relationship between the letter parties in the rest of the letter shape or control, even construct, the epistolary situation for the readers?

Why concentrate on the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians? Letters are a particular kind of textual discourse.<sup>5</sup> They represent a communication act or event via a text between two specific parties, the sender and recipient(s). When the letter is read by the recipient(s),

---

<sup>5</sup>See Violi, 'Letters', pp. 149-67.



the letter creates a particular encounter between these two parties, this is what one might call the epistolary situation. In essence, the effect of the letter-reading event is to propel the relationship between the letter parties forward into a new understanding of that relationship based on the implicit obligation the letter elicits either by requesting some kind of action or response or simply by the conveyance of 'new' information exchanged.<sup>6</sup>

The opening and closing of a letter are the essential textual or literary conventions which establish the relational perspective for the epistolary situation. In their conventional role, they particularize the epistolary situation by specifically identifying the letter parties. The opening and closing are also the primary means for establishing and reinforcing the relational tone of the epistolary situation. The opening and closing, in addition, are the primary textual clues to the way the letter writer wishes to set-up, maintain or develop the relationship between the letter parties.

While there are several ways to evaluate the relational perspective entextualized in the opening and closing conventions of a letter as in 1 Corinthians, in this study this relational perspective is examined from a literary-rhetorical perspective. From this perspective, the letter parties, the sender and the recipient(s), as

---

<sup>6</sup>H. Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr., Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia, Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae 102,2 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1956), pp. 88-95.

inscribed in the letter opening and closing are seen as literary constructions or presentations, and can be compared to the literary terms or concepts known as the 'implied author' and the 'implied reader'.<sup>7</sup> One aspect of the rhetoric of the letter is the effect the opening and closing creates through the selective literary presentation of the letter parties by the sender in order to conceptualize, confirm, and re-configure the relationship which existed prior to the letter. Rhetorically speaking, the particular literary inscription of the letter parties in the opening and closing becomes a rhetorical device which seeks to provoke the audience to accept or at least attend to the letter's message or purpose which is presented for their assent. The letter-text then becomes a rhetorical event in which the sender and recipient(s) confront their relationship as it is entextualized in the letter.

One way the relationship between the letter parties is entextualized is through the use and adaptation of the letter form. Use of a common literary genre for communication, like a letter, sets up certain expectations in the reader. When those expectations are played upon by the sender through creative adaptation of literary convention, there is a rhetorical effect which impinges upon the reading of the letter.

But the opening and closing of a letter is more than the literary and rhetorical conveyance of the relational

---

<sup>7</sup>These concepts are discussed in detail below, section 4.1.3.



perspective for the letter. All communication, including letters, has an ideological perspective.<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians as a particular example of the Christian letter tradition from the Pauline literature, represents a distinct religious ideology. Part of the rhetoric of the opening and closing is the way these epistolary elements help establish the ideological perspective for the letter. Once again, the ideological perspective can be evaluated on the basis of the way convention is used and adapted and on the basis of the way the opening and closing present a coherent textual unit with a form of argumentation and persuasion.

By using a literary-rhetorical perspective, the critic seeks to interpret the relational and ideological perspective of the letter of 1 Corinthians primarily as a literary phenomenon, and not primarily as a reference to the actual historical setting to which and in which the letter was written. This does not mean the historicity of the letter-text is denied or not recognized. It does mean the primary interpretative concern is not to recover the sense of the text as it relates to the historical situation, but rather the interpretative goal is to evaluate the literary dynamic of the text and its rhetorical effect. In particular, this study is interested in evaluating the rhetorical effect which stems from the textual inscription of the letter parties as literary

---

<sup>8</sup>T. Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp. 194-217; F. Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); D. Jobling and T. Pippin, eds., Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts, Semeia, 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

figures and which stems from the way the epistolary situation is constructed and controlled through the interplay of these literary figures in the letter-text.

What is distinctive about a literary-rhetorical interpretative approach to 1 Corinthians? As an ancient letter, 1 Corinthians has been read or interpreted traditionally in New Testament studies from the perspective of historical criticism, that is using the reconstructed historical context or occasion to which the letter is addressed, the reconstructed historical life and thought of the author, and the reconstructed historical identity of the intended audience, as the interpretative criteria for unpacking the meaning of the letter.<sup>9</sup> This study, while benefiting from many of the insights of historical criticism, limits the interpretative goal to the literary and rhetorical effects of the text. As far as can be determined, this interpretative approach has never been applied to the opening and closing of a Pauline letter.

Traditional historical-critical interpretations of Pauline letters have concentrated on the body of the letter. This focus on the letter-body is based on the assumption that it is in the letter-body that the essential message or teaching is communicated. The epistolary frame, the opening and closing, are perceived as ancillary to the

---

<sup>9</sup>E. Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 33-72; I. H. Marshall, 'Historical Criticism', in New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, ed. I.H. Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 126-38; J.H. Hayes and C.R. Holladay, Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook (London: SCM, 1987, 2nd ed.), pp. 45-58.



message of the letter-body. Traditionally, the opening and closing are simply textual units which particularize the occasion of the letter. Thus, traditional historical-critical interpretations of 1 Corinthians concentrate on the opening and closing in order to determine the historical situation to which the letter is addressed, neglecting the effect of the opening and closing upon the epistolary situation. This interpretative emphasis is evident in the recent traditional commentaries.<sup>10</sup> It is also starkly evident in the most thorough analysis of the historical situation behind 1 Corinthians, J.C. Hurd's work, The Origin of 1 Corinthians, which makes no reference to either the opening (1 Cor. 1.1-9) or the closing (1 Cor. 16.19-24) in the entire book.<sup>11</sup> This study switches the emphasis by looking specifically at the way the opening and closing function literarily and rhetorically to help control the epistolary situation.

## 2. Previous Research on the Pauline Opening and Closing

While historical critical commentaries and monographs on 1 Corinthians either neglect the opening and closing or simply interpret them with respect to their historical value, the opening and closing of Paul's letters have been a fruitful area of investigation in a number of recent studies, primarily with respect to their epistolary form

---

<sup>10</sup>For example, Fee, Corinthians; W. Schrage, Der erste Brief an die Korinther, EKK 7/1 (Zürich: Braunschweig, 1991); even C.H. Talbert, Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

<sup>11</sup>J.C. Hurd, The Origin of 1 Corinthians (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983 reprint).

and function. The literature on Paul the letter writer is vast,<sup>12</sup> so in this section only the studies which have significantly contributed to the literary-rhetorical approach adopted for this study will be surveyed. In particular, three types of studies will be surveyed: (1) studies on epistolary form, (2) rhetorical studies of Pauline letters, and (3) literary critical studies of Pauline writings.

### 2.1. The Study of the Pauline Epistolary Tradition

In recent years, the form and function of the Pauline opening and closing has been examined through comparative analysis with the epistolary practice found in the Greek documentary letters. In general, the Pauline opening and closing conventions have been found to be creative adaptations of the typical epistolary opening and closing found in the Greek family or friendly letter tradition.<sup>13</sup> The basic emphasis of these comparative analyses has been more formal than functional, providing a means to determine

---

<sup>12</sup>The most important works being, J.L. White, Light from Ancient Letters, Foundations and Facets: New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); D.E. Aune, The New Testament in Its Literary Environment, Library of Early Christianity, 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987); S.K. Stowers, Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity, Library of Early Christianity, 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); F. Schnider and W. Stenger, Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular, New Testament Tools and Studies, 11 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987); M.L. Stirewalt, Studies in Ancient Epistolography, SBL Resources for Biblical Study, 27 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993). See also the references listed in footnote 3. Add also J.A.D. Weima, The Pauline Letter Closings: Analysis and Hermeneutical Significance (JSNTSup, 101; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), which was published too late for this study.

<sup>13</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1739-40; Aune, New Testament, pp. 183-87; Doty, Letters, pp. 27-42.



the beginning and ending of the various letter parts in Paul's letters. Most importantly, these formal analyses have identified the opening and closing as distinctive textual units with their own textual integrity and function in the epistolary context. However, little work has been done in assessing how the formal features like the opening and closing function in the epistolary situation, particularly how they function in relation to the dynamics of the letter-text and letter communication in general, and how their literary form and content work to create certain rhetorical effects.

F.X.J. Exler, in 1923, examined the form of the ancient Greek papyrus letter in his book, The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter of the Epistolary Papyri.<sup>14</sup> His particular contribution was establishing the formulaic nature of the opening and closing, and identifying other formulaic features in the letter. His work is primarily a descriptive analysis providing almost no assessment of the function of the epistolary formulae. For this study his work is an important reference tool providing specific examples of the range of epistolary practices in Greek papyri letters.

In 1956, H. Koskenniemi provided a thorough analysis of the Greek epistolary tradition in his book, Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr. He surveyed ancient Greek epistolary theory and

---

<sup>14</sup>F.J.X. Exler, The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter of the Epistolary Papyri (3rd c. B.C. - 3rd c. A.D.): A Study in Greek Epistolography (Chicago: Ares, 1976 reprint).

practice across a 400 year span. His analysis of the epistolary formulas of Greek family letters revealed how they functioned to maintain the relationship between the letter parties. While in many ways this work is foundational for this study in providing a functional approach to the epistolary features of ancient letters, it is limited in that it does not evaluate the rhetorical or literary effect of the epistolary formula for the epistolary situation.<sup>15</sup>

J.L. White, in 1986, provided a comprehensive study of the Greek documentary letter, Light from Ancient Letters. White investigated the overall form of the Greek letter: opening, body and closing. He also surveyed numerous types of formulae used in each of the letter parts. He suggested that the parts of the letter served different functions: the opening and closing served to maintain contact; the letter body, either to disclose or seek information, or to request or command or instruct.<sup>16</sup> His study is foundational for this study providing both formal and functional analyses of Greek epistolary practice, in addition his study provides a reference for the Greek text and English translation of a wide range of documentary letters found in the Egyptian papyri.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Another work similar to Koskenniemi is K. Thraede, Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik, Zetemata, 48 (Münich: Beck, 1970), but it concentrates especially on the Latin literary letters and the letters of the post-apostolic Christian writers.

<sup>16</sup>White, Light, p. 198.

<sup>17</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, is another significant study of ancient letters advancing the work of White by providing a typology of the Greco-Roman letter. He also



Other studies have concentrated specifically on the Christian epistolary tradition. O. Roller, in 1933, analyzed the Pauline letter tradition in his book, Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe.<sup>18</sup> His work is marred by a lack of comparative understanding of the Greek letter with the Pauline corpus, hence he credits Paul with instituting a number of epistolary practices in the hellenistic world. This lack of comparative analysis makes his conclusions regarding the 'uniqueness' of Paul's epistolary practice basically useless.

W. Doty, in 1973 in his book, Letters in Primitive Christianity, provided a general but foundational survey of the relationship between letters in the hellenistic world and New Testament epistles. His work provides many insights into the epistolary features and functions of Paul's letters based on a comparative study. But his work is limited to simply that, identifying the features and their basic epistolary function.

A number of specific studies have analyzed particular epistolary elements of the Pauline letter. P. Schubert and P. O'Brien looked at the thanksgiving.<sup>19</sup> J. White examined

---

provides English translations of each letter type from a broad range of ancient epistolary literature including the papyri letters, literary letters, and Christian letters.

<sup>18</sup>O. Roller, Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe, BWANT 58 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933).

<sup>19</sup>P. Schubert, Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings, BZNW 20 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939); P.T. O'Brien, Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul (NovTSup, 49; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977).



the letter body.<sup>20</sup> T. Mullins has published important articles on various epistolary forms found in the New Testament letters.<sup>21</sup> Various other studies have clarified various epistolary forms used in the Pauline letter, mostly in the body.<sup>22</sup> Most of these studies are foundational in identifying the features which comprise the particular epistolary forms, and often provide clues to their epistolary function, but there is little critical assessment of how these forms impact the epistolary situation literarily and rhetorically.

The most comprehensive study of the opening and closing of New Testament epistles with regard to their form and structure is by F. Schnider and W. Stenger, published in 1987, Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular.

---

<sup>20</sup>J.L. White, The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle, SBLDS, 2 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972).

<sup>21</sup>T.Y. Mullins, 'Petition as a Literary Form', NovT 5 (1962), pp. 46-54; 'Disclosure: A Literary Form in the New Testament', NovT 7 (1964), pp. 44-50; 'Greeting as a New Testament Form', JBL 87 (1968), pp. 418-26; 'Formulas in New Testament Epistles', JBL 91 (1972), pp. 380-90; 'Visit Talk in New Testament Letters', CBQ 35 (1973), pp. 350-58; 'Topos as a New Testament Form', JBL 99 (1980), pp. 541-47.

<sup>22</sup>D.G. Bradley, 'The Topos as a Form in the Pauline Paraenesis', JBL 72 (1953), pp. 238-46; J. Jeremias, 'Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen', ZNW 49 (1958), pp. 145-56; C. Roetzel, 'The Judgment Form in Paul's Letters', JBL 88 (1969), pp. 305-12; R. Jewett, 'The Form and Function of the Homiletic Benediction', ATR 51 (1969), pp. 18-34; T.Y. Mullins, 'Ascription as a Literary Form', NTS 19 (1972-73), pp. 194-205; S.N. Olson, 'Epistolary Uses of Expressions of Self-Confidence', JBL 103 (1984), pp. 585-97; W.C. Coetzer, 'The Literary Genre of Paranesis in the Pauline Letters', Theologia Evangelica 17 (1984), pp. 36-42; J.C. Brunt, 'More on the Topos as a New Testament Form', JBL 104 (1985), pp. 495-500. See also the discussions and bibliography in J.L. Bailey and L.D. Vander Broek, Literary Forms in the New Testament (London: SPCK, 1992), pp. 31-87.

Their particular contribution is to identify each of the various elements of the opening and closing with ancient rhetorical speech elements. One of the methodological problems with their study is that the theoretical justification for making such an identification between two different modes of ancient discourse is not fully substantiated.<sup>23</sup> In addition, while their study is helpful in providing insights into the function of the epistolary elements in the opening and closing of New Testament letters, the limitation of their analysis to ancient rhetorical theory means their work does not provide much help for the literary-rhetorical reading this study offers.

## 2.2. Rhetorical Critical Studies of Paul's Letters

The recent application of ancient rhetorical theory to New Testament epistles is mixed with regard to the place of the opening and closing in the rhetorical structure of the letter. Some studies using rhetorical criticism place the opening and closing outside the rhetorical structure of the letter, as a kind of epistolary frame.<sup>24</sup> Some studies see the opening and closing as part of the letter's prooemium or exordium, and the closing as part of the epilogos or

---

<sup>23</sup>See the extended discussion on this issue, Chapter Two, section 3.4.

<sup>24</sup>So H.D. Betz, Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 16-23; F.F. Church, 'Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon', HTR 71 (1978), pp. 21-32; G.A. Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 24-25, 87.



peroratio.<sup>25</sup> The opening is interpreted in ancient rhetorical categories as helping to introduce the topic of the letter and as predisposing the reader(s) to the writer and his or her argument.<sup>26</sup> The closing is understood in ancient rhetorical categories as a summing up the letter's message and as a final appeal to the audience in order to dispose them toward the writer's argument.<sup>27</sup> These studies go further in assessing the function of the opening and closing, especially as they relate to the letter argument as a whole. The limitation of these studies is their effort to correlate the opening and closing to specific ancient rhetorical theories of invention, arrangement, and style as practised in oral rhetoric.

The most influential study of a Pauline letter based on a Greco-Roman rhetorical theory and practice is the work of H.D. Betz on Galatians.<sup>28</sup> He suggested that the whole of Galatians should be interpreted and analyzed as a

---

<sup>25</sup>W. Wuellner, 'Paul as Pastor: The Function of Rhetorical Questions in First Corinthians', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), p. 54; R. Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety, Foundations and Facets: New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), pp. 71-76; N. Elliott, The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism (JSNTSup, 45; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 70-94; cf. also F.W. Hughes, Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians (JSNTSup, 30; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 51-74.

<sup>26</sup>Hughes, Early, pp. 34-36.

<sup>27</sup>Hughes, Early, pp. 40-43.

<sup>28</sup>First presented in H.D. Betz, 'The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians', NTS 21 (1975), pp. 353-79; then more fully in, idem, Galatians; see also idem, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).



rhetorical discourse, an apologetic letter, which utilizes traditional ancient rhetorical categories of speech. His application of ancient rhetorical criteria to a whole epistolary text has engendered a variety of responses<sup>29</sup> and has been severely criticised as methodologically questionable.<sup>30</sup>

Recently a student of Betz, M.M. Mitchell, provided a thorough analysis of 1 Corinthians as a deliberative letter in the vein of political rhetoric found in the speeches and writings of Isocrates, Demosthenes, and others.<sup>31</sup> 1 Corinthians is seen as a rhetorical argument for concord and against factionalism within an actual epistolary context. One of the major weaknesses of this study, however, as with Betz's work on Galatians, is the theoretical assumption that a hellenistic-Jew like Paul

---

<sup>29</sup>Not least being imitation of his methodology, Jewett, Thessalonian; Hughes, Early; C.A. Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); W. Wuellner, 'Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over Romans', CBQ 38 (1976), pp. 330-51; T.H. Olbricht, 'An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians', in Greeks, Romans and Christians: Essays in Honor of A.J. Malherbe, eds. D. Balch, E. Ferguson and W. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 216-37.

<sup>30</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 145-46; J. Smit, 'The Letter to Galatians: A Deliberative Speech', NTS 35 (1989), pp. 1-26; R.N. Longenecker, Galatians, WBC, 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), pp. cix-cxii; G.W. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts (JSNTSup, 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 58-71.

<sup>31</sup>M.M. Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie, 28 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991). See also, D. Litfin, St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric, SNTSMS, 79 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), which appeared too late for consideration in this study.

would consciously imitate Greco-Roman oral rhetorical practice in writing a letter.<sup>32</sup> More significantly in terms of this study, both Betz and Mitchell analyze the opening and closing as epistolary features and not as part of the rhetorical argument of the letter. Betz and Mitchell both provide insightful readings of Paul's letters based on their rhetorical perspective, but like many historical-critical readings, the opening and closing are not interpreted as significant for the epistolary situation and the rhetoric of the letter.

M. Bünker's study of 1 Corinthians is an admirable attempt at recognizing the epistolary nature of 1 Corinthians and at providing a rhetorical analysis based primarily on the rhetorical theory of disposition (Dispositionskunst).<sup>33</sup> Bünker examines 1 Corinthians 1-4 and 15 identifying each aspect of the argument in these sections with traditional parts of rhetorical speeches. Bünker's epistolary theory is anchored too much in the ideal theory of the ancient epistolary theorists and not enough in an actual descriptive analysis of letter communication. Equally his comparison of Paul's argumentation with Seneca skews his analysis by assuming Paul is writing in a similar literary-philosophical way. Though concerned with epistolographic features, he does not

---

<sup>32</sup>See the discussion of this methodological assumption in Chapter Two, section 3.4.

<sup>33</sup>M. Bünker, Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief, Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten, 28 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).



examine the opening and closing conventions and thus his work is not very helpful for this study.

In the mid 1980's, a classicist, G. Kennedy, applied classical rhetorical criticism to the whole range of New Testament literature in his book, New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism, suggesting a formulaic procedure for analysing textual units according to the theories of ancient rhetoric. His easily applicable procedure for rhetorical criticism has spawned numerous rhetorical analyses of New Testament texts.<sup>34</sup> As opposed to Betz and Mitchell who see Paul as specifically imitating ancient rhetorical practice, Kennedy's understanding of the application of ancient oral rhetorical theory to written texts is based more on the premise that rhetoric is a universal means of discourse.<sup>35</sup> But if rhetoric is a universal means of discourse, then the understanding and analysis of rhetoric in a text need not be limited to the practice and understanding of rhetoric as found in the

---

<sup>34</sup>D.F. Watson, Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter, SBLDS, 104 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); W.Wuellner, 'Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?', CBO 49 (1987), pp. 448-63; D.F. Watson, ed., Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy (JSNTSup, 50; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

<sup>35</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 10-11. A detailed examination of this perspective on rhetoric and its use in New Testament studies is S.E. Porter, 'The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature', in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht, eds., Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 100-22.



Greco-Roman period.<sup>36</sup> Modern rhetorical theory is an equally viable understanding of rhetoric which Kennedy as a classicist neglects as a way to assess the rhetoric of New Testament texts.

W. Wuellner has been influential in the application of rhetorical criticism to the New Testament.<sup>37</sup> In particular his appropriation of New Rhetoric and modern communication theory in his most recent writings has extended New Testament rhetorical criticism so that it includes any communication theory which helps illumine the way a text works to create its effect. As opposed to the limited definition of rhetoric in the work of Betz and Kennedy, his work has been most suggestive for the theoretical and methodological approach of this study.

A work by S.M. Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians attempts to break new ground in applying an anti-foundational theory of rhetoric

---

<sup>36</sup>C.J. Classen, 'St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric', in Rhetoric and the New Testament, p. 290: 'there is no reason why one should restrict oneself to the rhetoric of the ancients in interpreting texts from antiquity, and not avail oneself of the discoveries and achievements of more recent times'.

<sup>37</sup>W. Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics: From "Truth and Method" to "Truth and Power"', Scriptura 3 (1989), pp. 1-54; 'The Rhetorical Structure of Luke 12 in its Wider Context', Neot 22 (1989), pp. 283-310; 'Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11', in Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament, New Testament Tools and Studies, 15, eds. P.J. Hartin and J.H. Petzer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 171-85.

to 1 Corinthians 1-4.<sup>38</sup> Drawing on literary theory, philosophical hermeneutics and classical rhetoric, Pogoloff develops a theory of situational rhetoric which explores the interplay between textual form, content, and historical exigencies. In his reading of 1 Corinthians 1-4, he exegetes the text from the perspective of the rhetorical situation, a situation which is historically specific, but textually inscribed. His analysis does not deal with the letter opening or closing as part of this rhetorical situation so<sup>it</sup><sub>^</sub> does not contribute much to this particular study.

So while there have been a number of rhetorical analyses of 1 Corinthians, either the epistolary opening and closing have been passed by as rhetorically insignificant, or they have been examined in relation to ancient categories of rhetorical theory.

### 2.3. Literary Approaches to Pauline Letters

One particular area of neglect with respect to the interpretation and analysis of the opening and closing convention in Paul's letters is a literary-critical analysis. In fact, there have been very few literary-critical studies of St. Paul's writings. While there are many literary theories one might adopt to analyze the opening and closing, none have been used.<sup>39</sup> This is striking given the fact that the letters are literary

---

<sup>38</sup>S.M. Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians, SBLDS, 134 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

<sup>39</sup>R. Selden, A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985).



texts. The fact that none have been used is possibly due to the perception that literary theoretical approaches are best used on narrative and that literary theory is not very conducive to addressing the historical questions and concerns which dominate most biblical criticism.<sup>40</sup> But literary theories might have potential insights into understanding the function of the opening and closing as textual units within the larger context of the text as a whole.

One of the most significant studies of a Pauline letter incorporating literary theory is N.R. Petersen, Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World. This ground-breaking study provides insights into transforming letters into narrative worlds, a narratology of letters. Petersen is especially helpful in understanding aspects of plot and point of view in letters. However, Petersen's approach is more concerned with aspects of referentiality, as they exist in the narrative world of the text and as they exist in the sociological world-view of the writer, Paul. In his analysis of Philemon, he does not consider the opening and closing as significant: 'we will derive the referential actions from the body of the letter (vv.4-22) and use information from the opening (vv. 1-3) and close (vv. 23-25) only for supplementary purposes. No referential actions are represented in either the

---

<sup>40</sup>See the remarks on literary criticism by C. Tuckett, Reading the New Testament: Methods of Interpretation (London: SPCK, 1987), pp. 174-81; Hayes and Holladay, Biblical Exegesis, pp. 73-82.



opening or the close'.<sup>41</sup> Yet, his work is suggestive for this study by providing an example of how literary theory can illumine the communication dynamics of an ancient letter and by providing a theory for identifying and extracting the story of the relationship between the letter parties from a letter.

In sum, though there have been previous studies which examine the opening and closing of a Pauline letter, they have mostly been limited to a comparative and formal structural or epistolographic analysis or to an interpretation based on ancient rhetorical theory and practice. There have been no studies of Pauline epistolary practice which used a literary critical theory to illumine the function and effect of the opening and closing as a textual unit. The opening and closing of a Pauline letter remain a fruitful area of exploration.

How do the opening and closing contribute to the situation of the letter as a communication event between two parties? How does the literary presentation of the sender and recipients set up a rhetorical dynamic for the letter? How do the opening and closing as conventional epistolary elements create a tone for the letter that is personal and situation specific? How do the opening and closing contribute to the letter message or purpose? How is the rhetorical situation established by literary convention in the opening sustained in the remainder of the letter? These are a few of the questions which deserve

---

<sup>41</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, p. 65.

fuller consideration than they have received so far in the study of Pauline epistolary practice.

### 3. The Thesis Plan and Procedure

The opening and closing as epistolary convention are important textual units which create and establish the nature and tone for the textual or epistolary situation in which the letter parties meet. This study focuses on the rhetorical and literary facets of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians in order to evaluate the nature of the entextualized relationship between the letter parties and to evaluate how that entextualized relationship becomes a rhetorical means for persuading the reader(s) to adhere to the religious and spiritual perspective presented in the letter.

In chapter one, the interpretative perspective which governs the reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians is explained and distinguished from other rhetorical perspectives. Chapter one explains the terms and concepts of the thesis project: 'literary-rhetorical reading'. Chapter one, first of all, justifies the limited interpretative perspective adopted for this study by explaining how a text is open to many different readings and how any reading (or interpretation) of a text represents the dialectical process between the reader (or critic) and the text in a specified context. Once this understanding of 'reading' is grasped, it is methodologically sound to adopt a specific interpretative stance to 'read' a text without necessarily asserting <sup>that</sup> ~~one~~ is offering a comprehensive and exhaustive interpretation



of a text. Secondly, 'rhetoric' is defined as an evaluative process that examines the kinds of effects a text produces and how it produces those effects. For this study, the rhetorical evaluation is limited to a reading of the literary facets of the opening and closing which centre on the entextualization of the sender and addressee as the implied author and the implied reader.

In order to evaluate the entextualization of the sender and recipient, the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians is placed in its literary context. In chapter two, the broad context is surveyed by reference to the ancient epistolary practice of Greek and Jewish letters. While the nature of Greco-Roman epistolary practice in general is surveyed, the chapter is specifically interested in the opening and closing conventions which are used in the Greek letter tradition and the Jewish letter tradition. Also, chapter two examines the dynamics of epistolary communication in the Greco-Roman world and how it relates to the ideal(s) of ancient epistolary theory and ancient rhetorical theory and practice.

In chapter three, the Pauline letter tradition, based on the generally accepted authentic Pauline letters is surveyed. Once again, the broad features of the Pauline letter are examined, but special emphasis is placed on the opening and closing convention. The Pauline letter tradition provides a second literary context in which to compare and contrast the particular practice which is found in 1 Corinthians. Such comparison and contrast helps to isolate the conventional and the distinctive features of



the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians so that they can be read from a literary-rhetorical perspective.

Against this background of literary convention, the opening and closing conventions found in 1 Corinthians are read to see how the opening and closing create the relationship between the sender and the recipients as a literary context for the letter-text. Chapter four offers a literary-rhetorical reading of the opening, 1 Cor. 1.1-9. Chapter five presents a literary-rhetorical reading of the closing, 1 Cor. 16.19-24. It is suggested that 1 Corinthians in the letter opening and closing, utilizes a rhetoric of power or authority in order to ensure that the relationship between the sender and the recipient(s) is based on the religious and spiritual premises asserted by the sender.

As the opening and closing helps create and establish the textual situation, chapter six provides an extended evaluation of the rhetorical situation entextualized in the letter as a whole. Most rhetorical critical analyses are specifically related to the historical contingencies to which the letter addressed. Chapter six seeks to show how the rhetorical situation is entextualized in the text and operates as a rhetorical device to persuade the readers to assent to the letter message.

In sum, this study is an experiment of sorts. Instead of interpreting the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians from a traditional historical critical perspective, it is the attempt to apply a limited, but defined interpretative perspective, a literary-rhetorical perspective. From this

perspective, this study is interested in discovering the rhetorical effects the conventional epistolary features of the letter's opening and closing create when read and compared against the literary background of Greek epistolary practice and of Pauline epistolary practice. It is interested in the rhetorical effect which stems from reading the way the relationship between the letter parties is selectively and literarily inscribed in the opening and closing conventions by the sender, thereby working to establish the epistolary situation for the reader. It is interested in the way the entextualization of the rhetorical situation creates a rhetorical effect by functioning within the letter text as means of persuasion. This focus on the rhetorical effects of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians based more on their literary nature than their historical nature will hopefully provide new insights into the importance of the opening and closing convention for the epistolary situation of 1 Corinthians.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A LITERARY-RHETORICAL APPROACH TO READING THE OPENING AND CLOSING OF 1 CORINTHIANS

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this opening chapter is to outline a method for reading the Pauline epistle, 1 Corinthians, with particular concern for the letter opening and closing. As outlined in the introduction, the specific methodological perspective of this study can be labelled, literary-rhetorical. In order to set out the parameters of this methodology, the three key terms essential to the interpretative perspective of this study are defined: 'literary', 'rhetorical', and 'reading'.

The first section will explore why the term, 'reading', is appropriate as a general interpretative perspective.<sup>1</sup> In this study, the concept of reading is tied to the dialectical theory of reading suggested by Werner Jeanrond<sup>2</sup> and to the communication model proposed by

---

<sup>1</sup>The relationship between the reading process and text-interpretation is articulated from a literary-critical perspective in E. Freund, The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1987).

<sup>2</sup>W.G. Jeanrond, Text and Interpretation as Categories of Theological Thinking, trans. T.J. Wilson (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), pp. 104-119; and Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 93-119.



Roman Jakobson,<sup>3</sup> both of which suggest that any communication event has certain essential factors or coordinates. This study of the concept of 'reading' will examine specifically how the Jakobsonian coordinates of a communication event, in particular the author, the text, and the reader as defined and configured by a critic or reader in a specified context, control any reading of a text.

The second section will examine how rhetorical criticism defines the reading coordinates of author, text, and reader. In this study, the relationship between the aptum, which has been identified in rhetorical criticism as a way of defining the relationship between a speaker, the speech, and the audience,<sup>4</sup> and Jakobson's communication model with its identified communication coordinates, will be examined. With regard to rhetorical criticism, it is also necessary to examine the different rhetorical-critical approaches that are being applied to biblical texts in New Testament studies at present, and thus to identify and distinguish the specific rhetorical-critical stance operative in this study.<sup>5</sup> Thus this section will explore

---

<sup>3</sup>R. Jakobson, 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in Style in Language, ed. T.A. Seboek (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), pp. 350-77.

<sup>4</sup>H. Lausberg, Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik, 2 Vols. (Munich: Hueber, 1960), pp. 2:54ff. and 258; also Wuellner, 'Paul's Rhetoric', p. 342.

<sup>5</sup>Rhetorical-critical approaches to the New Testament are surveyed in C.C. Black II, 'Keeping Up with Recent Studies, XVI. Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation', ET 100 (1989), pp. 256-57; and J. Lambrecht, 'Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament', Bijdragen 50 (1989), pp. 245-48; V.K. Robbins and J.H. Patton, 'Rhetoric and Biblical Criticism', The Quarterly

not only how a rhetorical critical stance configures the communication coordinates as an interpretative perspective, but also how these defined coordinates can be understood to establish the interpretative goal for the rhetorical approach of this study.

In the third section, the literary dimension of the interpretative method used in this study is examined. Specifically, this section examines a literary perspective on three aspects of textuality: the relationship of a text to its literary tradition, the inter-textual relationships within the text itself, and the literary presentation of the reading coordinates or the elements of the aptum in a text. In addition, this section clarifies how a literary reading of the letter opening and closing of 1 Corinthians in this study is distinguished from an historical-critical perspective.

In sum, this chapter seeks to define the specific interpretative stance or perspective operative in this study's analysis of the letter opening and closing of 1 Corinthians. In essence the methodological perspective being established is a literary-rhetorical reading of a text. In order to define this interpretative perspective, three key terms are examined, 'literary', 'rhetorical', and 'reading'. By examining these terms, the interpretative goal of this study will be set forth: to provide a closely circumscribed reading of the opening and closing of 1



Corinthians based on a literary understanding of the rhetorical effect a text creates.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. The Reading Act as a Communication Event<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this first section is to explore the concept of 'reading' as a general category of interpretation. Implicit in this discussion is the nature of the critic as a reader.<sup>8</sup> In a sense, this section seeks to justify the fact that it is possible for a critic (or reader) to adopt a particular interpretative perspective in order to read a text and thereby offer an interpretation of

---

<sup>6</sup>Throughout this chapter the text will be referred to as a distinct and separate entity, even as a personified entity. This type of autonomous reference to the text is a type of short hand in order to speak of the different factors which comprise the linguistic instantiation of the text as a product of the author to be realized by a reader or as a distinct and autonomous 'work'. This is not to negate the relationship of the text to its author or reader, but a critical manoeuvre which recognizes that a written text is distanced from its author, from the original situation of the discourse and from its original addressees, and thereby is susceptible to interpretation and assessment in this 'autonomous' state; see P. Ricoeur, 'The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation', Philosophy Today 17 (1973), pp. 129-41.

<sup>7</sup>Earlier versions of this section were given as conference papers at the National Conference on Literature and Religion, University of Durham, 14 April 1989; and the University of Birmingham, Department of Theology, Post-graduate Seminar in Biblical Interpretation and Hermeneutics, 8 May 1990.

<sup>8</sup>The distinction between a critic and a reader is complex. The critic is always a reader, but may in the context of a critical theory examine the relationship of a text to a critically defined reader/audience. On this distinction and problem, see P. de Man, 'The Resistance to Theory', in The Resistance to Theory, Theory and History of Literature, 33 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 3-20; J. Hillis Miller, 'Presidential Address 1986. The Triumph of Theory, the Resistance to Reading, and the Question of the Material Base', PMLA 102 (1987), pp. 281-91.



the text.<sup>9</sup> This reading of a text according to a specified interpretative perspective is not meant to be an exhaustive interpretation nor necessarily an approximation of the intended meaning of the text.

In order to explore the reading act as an interpretative act, the concept of reading is examined in relation to Werner Jeanrond's dialectical theory of reading and to Roman Jakobson's communication model. Based on the understanding of the reading act as a dialectic process and as a communication event, it is proposed that a text is open to any number of readings depending on how one understands the relationship between the text and the reader and on how a reader defines and configures the coordinates of Jakobson's communication model as the interpretative context.

### 2.1. The Dialectical Theory of Reading

When the word 'reading' began to be the dominant word in literary interpretation to designate a critical interpretation of a text is difficult to pin-point. However, in most surveys of the development of literary theory, the emphasis upon the critical act of interpretation as an act of reading is associated with the

---

<sup>9</sup>Reader-response theory is one critical discourse which has recognized the role the reader/critic plays in affecting an interpretation of a text, and recourse will be made at points to this critical discourse to support the concept of reading postulated in this section without necessarily endorsing a reader-response theory for the methodology of this study.

emergence of reader-response criticism.<sup>10</sup> It is not so important to know the when, however, as it is to recognize the interpretative goal denoted by the use of the word 'reading'. D. Birch suggests that the difference from earlier interpretative frameworks could be designated as the switch from interpreting a text in order to extract 'what a text means', for instance extracting the meaning put in a text by the author, to interpreting a text in order to explore 'how a text means', or more precisely how meaning is constructed from a text.<sup>11</sup>

Birch's remarks put emphasis upon the text as the essential entity in the construction of meaning. However, the word 'reading' implies a more dynamic process. W. Jeanrond has provided an important philosophical and hermeneutical foundation for understanding the relationship between texts (text-production) and the reading process (text-reception) in two seminal works, Text and Interpretation and Theological Hermeneutics.<sup>12</sup> In Theological Hermeneutics, in a chapter titled, 'The Transformative Power of Reading', Jeanrond suggests two key propositions about reading: (1) 'reading is an interpretative activity'; and (2) 'reading is...an act of

---

<sup>10</sup>Freund, Return, pp. 69-156; J.P. Tompkins, ed., Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); S.R. Suleiman and I. Crosman, eds., The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

<sup>11</sup>D. Birch, Language, Literature and Critical Practice: Ways of Analysing Text, INTERFACE Series (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 5-44.

<sup>12</sup>See footnote 2.



communication in which a given set of written signs is decoded; as such it is always an act of response to a prior act of writing'.<sup>13</sup> This leads Jeanrond to posit that reading is an art; as such, he then proposes a phenomenological description of the act of reading.

Jeanrond's phenomenological description of reading suggests that there is a dialectical relationship between text and reading.<sup>14</sup> The use of the term 'reading' to describe the way a critic constructs meaning from a text emphasizes the fact that the reading event is a dialectic between the text and the reader. From this perspective, the text is understood not as a static depository of a single invested meaning or as an open entity subject to unlimited and unrestricted possibilities of meaning.<sup>15</sup> Rather, the text, on a very basic level, is a linguistic configuration analysable at the level of semantics (the study of the meanings of linguistic elements, from the smallest units, morphemes, to words and larger text units), syntax (the study of the syntagmatic connections among linguistic elements, such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences), and pragmatics (the study of the meanings of linguistic elements used in a particular context).<sup>16</sup> These

---

<sup>13</sup>Jeanrond, Theological, p. 93.

<sup>14</sup>Jeanrond, Theological, p. 94.

<sup>15</sup>These two poles or extremes for a theory of meaning(s) for a text are often designated as determinism and relativism (also objectivist and subjectivist); see Jeanrond, Theological, pp. 95-98.

<sup>16</sup>Semantics, syntax, and pragmatics are three subdivisions of linguistics; see D. Crystal, Linguistics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985, 2nd ed.), pp. 196-247; and Jeanrond, Theological, pp. 84-86.



three basic dimensions of a text provide significant but not absolute sign-posts and boundaries for the reader's understanding of the sense of a text.

A text, then, exists as a linguistic configuration or instantiation that needs to be realized or actualized by a reader reading.<sup>17</sup> The reader reading responds to the dynamics of the linguistic configuration; but since it is not an absolutely determined response, the reader's response is simultaneously an individual response, in which the reader brings his or her own identity as an external context which significantly influences the process of constructing understanding.<sup>18</sup> Thus, when one refers to the interpretation of a text as 'a reading', one is referring to the 'dynamic process which remains in principle open-ended because every reader can only disclose the sense of a text in a process and as an individual...Reading is always also a projection of a new image of reality, as this is co-

---

<sup>17</sup>This is a very simplistic statement of textuality or of what makes a text a text. Two excellent discussions of textuality are Jeanrond, Text, pp. 74-103, and Theological, pp. 78-92. Jeanrond uses the terms 'genre' and 'style' as a means to coordinate a theory of text-production and text-reception--genre indicating the influence of conventional communication patterns, and style indicating the writer's contribution and perspective in text communication. While these designations of the dimensions of text communication are helpful, it is unclear whether genre and style exist as extrinsic or intrinsic factors with regard to textuality. Further, it is unclear in Jeanrond's theory of text-production whether genre and style are aspects located in the author coordinate or in the text coordinate of text-production.

<sup>18</sup>To speak of the reader's identity is to refer both to the world of the reader/interpreter and the self of the reader/interpreter; Jeanrond, Theological, pp. 105-113. See footnote 10, above, for references to discussions regarding the role of the reader in affecting the construction of meaning.

initiated by the text and achieved by the reader in the relationship with the text in the act of reading'.<sup>19</sup>

What is important to remember in Jeanrond's proposal with respect to the reading process is that 'a reading' is (a) open-ended, and (b) results in a new image of reality. If this 'reading' of Jeanrond has any legitimacy, it suggests that 'reading' as a general interpretative perspective means that every reading act or event is distinct and produces an individualistic understanding of a text. Yet, in every individual reading what remains constant is the text. Jeanrond provides this insight based on the dialectic relationship between the text and the reader reading.

Jeanrond is primarily interested in examining the theological and hermeneutical implications of personal subjectivity and human self-understanding as they occur in textual interpretation. This explains his focus on text-production (texts) and text-reception (the reader reading). Implicit in this dialectic between the text and the reader which leads to self-understanding, is the full-orbed reading act or reading event. If one wishes to examine the communication event which occurs in a reading act, the focus of the reading event expands to include more than the dialectic between the text and the reader reading. In order to understand other significant factors which impinge upon the reading event, Roman Jakobson's communication model will be examined.

---

<sup>19</sup>Jeanrond, Text, p. 104.



## 2.2. Reading and Roman Jakobson's Communication Model

Reading is not a straightforward act in the sense that one merely apprehends the words on the page in the given sequence. Reading, whether it is an individual act of silent reading or a public act of oral interpretation, is a complex event because it is an interpretative act and a communication event.<sup>20</sup> Reading is an interpretative act in that it is a complex process that must weigh and evaluate a variety of linguistic components in a communicative context in order to secure a meaning of a text which is part of Jeanrond's theory of reading offered above.<sup>21</sup> As such, using the terminology of modern linguistics, reading is a communication event.<sup>22</sup>

While there are several different models that attempt to diagram the factors and functions of a communication event,<sup>23</sup> a common model used in literary theory is based on the communication model developed by Roman Jakobson.<sup>24</sup> His

---

<sup>20</sup>See again, Jeanrond, Theological, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup>Jeanrond, Text, pp. 64-72.

<sup>22</sup>A helpful discussion of a linguistic understanding of written versus spoken texts is found in G. Brown and G. Yule, Discourse Analysis, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 14-19. For a fuller examination of the place of linguistic analysis in the interpretation of literature, see R. Fowler, Linguistics and the Novel, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1977); and Linguistic Criticism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>23</sup>See discussions in M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: Norton, 1958), pp. 6-30; P. Hernadi, 'Literary Theory: A Compass for Critics', Critical Inquiry 3 (1976), pp. 369-86. Compare models for narrative structures as in S. Chatman, Story and Discourse (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 267.

<sup>24</sup>Jakobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', pp. 350-77.



model was primarily intended for verbal communication and for a formalist-structuralist understanding of poetics,<sup>25</sup> but its applicability has been legitimately extended to written texts because they too are recognized to be communication acts. The essential communication act, as defined by Jakobson, is that an addresser sends a message to an addressee. The essential components or coordinates in Jakobson's communication model are the addresser, the message, and the addressee; the operative factors are the context, the contact, and the code.<sup>26</sup>

CODE  
ADDRESSER--MESSAGE--ADDRESSEE  
CONTACT  
CONTEXT

These coordinates can be extrapolated into the reading process and renamed accordingly as author, text, and reader, with the operative factors remaining essentially the same.<sup>27</sup> The essential communication act also can be restated: the author writes a text for a reader; or, for

---

<sup>25</sup>A helpful critique of Jakobson's poetics is found in J. Culler, Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 55-74. See also N.R. Petersen, Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), pp. 33-48; and Freund, Return, pp. 74-78.

<sup>26</sup>Jakobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', p. 353: 'To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to...seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially common to the addresser and addressee...and finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connectin between the addresser and addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication'.

<sup>27</sup>Hernadi, 'Literary Theory', p. 369.

the purposes of this study, the sender writes a letter to the recipient(s).

Reading can be understood as a response to this communication act. To focus on the reader, the communicative act can be accordingly stated in reverse: the reader 'reads' a text by an author, or the recipients read the letter from the sender. The important word is 'read'. What does it mean in that statement? The Concise Oxford Dictionary suggests a definition of the word 'read' which clarifies the matter, 'to be able to convert into the intended words or meaning expressed by written or printed symbols'. The process of converting symbols into meaning can be described as interpretation. There is presently a developing discipline concerned with text apprehension, which greatly expands what the dictionary suggests.<sup>28</sup>

Part of the reason a reading act is an interpretative act is because each component in the communication model influences the reading process and because the various components separately and as a totality must be weighed and evaluated by the reader.<sup>29</sup> In a verbal communicative act, the components are generally physically obvious: one can see the addressee, though the message is oral. With respect to reading a written text the components are not generally and immediately accessible. In a reading event, the reader acts as the agent who actualizes or realizes,

---

<sup>28</sup>Birch, Language, pp. 5-165, provides a general introduction to various theories of textual analysis.

<sup>29</sup>Freund, Return, p. 159, 'In this model [Jakobson's]...meaning does not reside in any single element but derives from the total transaction of elements'.



not only the message/text, but the entire communicative situation.<sup>30</sup>

In the reading act, the reader is also one of the constituent components of the communication event. The reader becomes one of the determinate factors in the communicative event matrix when reading a written text. Every reading act involves a re-configuration of the communicative coordinates from the reader's perspective, and every reading act involves construing these coordinates in accordance with the reader's perspective.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, every reading act produces an interpretation with respect to meaning based on the reader's configuration and construal of the reading or communicative coordinates as diagrammed by Jakobson.<sup>32</sup>

With regard to scripture, readers often come to the text with a pre-understanding that the text is sacred; they believe that this is an inherent quality of the text. But the authority that undergirds such an assumption is a theological stance based on the acceptance of what the text may claim for itself or on the acceptance of the community opinion about the text.<sup>33</sup> Either way, it is the reader who assigns to the text the status of sacred text, which in turn influences the reading process.

---

<sup>30</sup>Jeanrond, Text, pp. 75-79, 83-85.

<sup>31</sup>Selden, A Reader's Guide, pp. 106-109.

<sup>32</sup>This is analogous to Jeanrond's conclusion about the dialectical reading process noted above.

<sup>33</sup>R. Detweiler, 'What is a Sacred Text?', Semeia 31 (1985), pp. 213-30.

A second communicative coordinate which influences the reading process is the context. The operative factors which Jakobson named the code, the context, and the contact can be included into the single factor of the larger context, referring chiefly, but not exclusively, to the variety of extrinsic factors involved in the writing and reading process. Extrinsic factors are those factors that account for the production of the text at the time of writing and at the time of reading.<sup>34</sup> One can choose any number of ways to illustrate this. Context can refer to that which the text alludes to historically. When reading the gospels, the reader can create a narrative of Jesus in ancient Palestine. For the epistles, the reader can create a didactic context of, perhaps, Paul instructing the ancient church at Corinth.

Context can also refer to the immediate with respect to the actual reader. If one reads scripture in the early morning quiet of a sitting room, the reading experience is different from the experience of reading it in a corporate church service. Immediate context is also influenced by the simple factors of what translation is used or whether one reads scripture in its 'original' language.

A third communicative factor influencing the reading process is the text. Earlier the text was defined as a

---

<sup>34</sup>Extrinsic factors as they affect the reading of a text are examined in R. Wellek and A. Warren, Theory of Literature (Handsworth: Penguin Books, 1963, 3d ed.); W.C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1983, 2nd ed.), see esp. pp. 103-106; J. Barton, Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), pp. 140-51, 158-97.



linguistic instantiation with at least three basic dimensions: semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. From these dimensions one can draw out three of the primary interpretative influences embedded in a text: one, the lexical semantics of the text, or the specific words selected; two, the syntax of the text, or the word order and their connections; and three, the discourse of the text, or the arrangement and argument of the textual units found in the text.<sup>35</sup> For example, reading a genealogy is different from reading a parable; reading an incident about the life of Jesus in the gospels is different from reading a chapter in Romans. Yet all these texts share the simple fact of being words selected, placed in a certain order, and grouped in larger units to communicate an idea, message, story, or even a feeling.

The point of this discussion about the communication act is to point out the complexity of the reading act. Reading is a communication event, and it is an interpretative act on the part of the reader. The reading process can be described as the way a reader makes sense of a text through the dialectical relationship between the text and the reader reading in a specified context. As the reading process is part of a complete communicative situation, the reading experience is influenced by the various contextual factors and components which comprise the communication event as posited by Jakobson.

---

<sup>35</sup>A fuller explanation of the relationship between text-linguistics and an understanding of textuality is provided by Jeanrond, Text, pp. 74-94.

The reader is one integral component in the communicative matrix and as such affects the communication act. The reader affects the communication act in the way he or she individually actualizes the text in its presentation as a linguistic instantiation. The reader also affects the communication act by identifying and construing the communication coordinates, separately and as a totality, based on the reader's interpretative perspective. Every reading of a text represents a particular understanding and configuration of the communication coordinates, and, therefore, also a distinctive interpretation of the text. When a reader offers his or her distinctive reading, a reader must be able to critically identify his or her understanding of each component of the communication components.

A fuller example of this concept of reading is evident when one examines the interpretative theory of the historical-critical method. The interpretative strategy which has operated in the theological community and is still the dominant strategy employed by biblical scholars is the historical-critical method. The aim of this reading strategy is to find the meaning that the original author intended and/or that the original readers of the text most likely understood.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the historical-critical

---

<sup>36</sup>Krentz, Historical-Critical, esp. pp. 33-54; Tuckett, Reading, esp. pp. 184-87; G.D. Fee, New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), esp. pp. 21-50; also H. Conzelmann and A. Lindemann, Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of N.T. Exegesis, trans. S.S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), pp. 1-104; Hayes and Holladay, Biblical Exegesis, pp. 5-44.



method seeks to secure or anchor the meaning of the biblical text by confining the exegetical task to the original historical context. The coordinates of the communication act for this reading event include the original author, the original text in its original language, the originally intended reader(s), and the original ancient situation or historical context in which the original author and reader lived and to which the ancient text refers. One historical-critic describes the interpretative task as follows: 'the discovery of what the text means in itself, i.e. the original intention of the writer, and the meaning the passage would have held for the readers for whom it was first intended'.<sup>37</sup>

The historical-critical method represents only one configuration of the communication coordinates that is possible in 'reading' an ancient text like 1 Corinthians. At present some of the other reading strategies used in biblical studies include narrative criticism, structuralist criticism, sociological criticism, canonical criticism, feminist criticism, rhetorical criticism, and reader-response criticism;<sup>38</sup> all of which represent a different

---

<sup>37</sup>R.T. France, 'Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples', in New Testament Interpretation, p. 252.

<sup>38</sup>These and additional strategies are explored in P.J. Hartin and J.H. Petzer, eds., Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament, New Testament Tools and Studies, 15 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991); J.C. Anderson and S.D. Moore, eds., Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); S.L. McKenzie and S. R. Haynes, To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993); D.J.A. Clines, S.E. Fowl, and S.E. Porter, The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield (JSOTSup,

understanding and configuration of the communication coordinates. One of the exciting tasks of theology and its sub-discipline of biblical studies today is exploring the interpretative and theological implications that result from the different readings of scripture.<sup>39</sup> It remains then to establish what is meant by a literary-rhetorical reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians and how this strategy configures the communication coordinates.

### 3. Rhetoric and the Reading of Scripture<sup>40</sup>

Another possible way to construct and configure the coordinates of the communication event is according to a reading strategy called rhetorical criticism. Traditionally, rhetoric has been understood as a particular kind of communication, the persuasive speech, with rhetorical criticism being the critical analysis of the formal qualities of the speech utilized to make the speech effectively persuasive.<sup>41</sup> In biblical studies, the application of rhetorical criticism often meant analysing the literary and rhetorical devices that can be isolated in

---

87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

<sup>39</sup>This issue is explored in a number of essays found in F. Watson, ed., The Open Text (London: SCM, 1993).

<sup>40</sup>An earlier version of this section was given as a conference paper at the international conference, 'Reading Scripture: Literary Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics', at Pannonhalma, Hungary, 4-6 July 1991 and was published as D.L. Stamps, 'Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetoric of New Testament Criticism', Literature and Theology 6 (1992), pp. 268-79.

<sup>41</sup>G.A. Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 3-24.



the text as matters of style or ornamentation.<sup>42</sup> Recently, the work of the so-called New Rhetoricians has formulated an understanding of rhetoric as the way all discourse induces or enhances an audience's adherence to certain values and hierarchies.<sup>43</sup> As a consequence, rhetoric has become a ubiquitous term, applied to a wide range of discourse.<sup>44</sup> This shift has resulted in biblical studies applying different rhetorical critical models in order to analyse how the argument of a biblical text creates its persuasive effect.<sup>45</sup>

In order to understand how rhetorical criticism might be used as a way of reading New Testament epistles, in particular the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, it is necessary to examine both the current practice(s) of rhetorical criticism in New Testament studies and to attempt to posit a working definition of rhetoric for this

---

<sup>42</sup>See the discussion and references in Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', pp. 13-19.

<sup>43</sup>Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, trans. by J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969); W.J. Brandt, The Rhetoric of Argumentation (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).

<sup>44</sup>Theoretical justification for using the term 'rhetoric' as a meta-label for discourse can be found in Eagleton, Literary Theory, especially pp. 194-217; D. Leith and G. Myerson, The Power of Address: Explorations in Rhetoric (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 114-48, 204-40. See also J.S. Nelson, A. Megill, and D N. McCloskey, eds., The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), and R.H. Roberts and J.M.M. Good, The Recovery of Rhetoric: Persuasive Discourse and Disciplinarity in the Human Sciences (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1993).

<sup>45</sup>B.L. Mack, Rhetoric and the New Testament, Guides to Biblical Scholarship, NT series (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp 9-17; Stamps, 'Rhetorical Criticism', pp. 268-79.

study. First, a review of recent developments in rhetorical criticism of the New Testament is offered.<sup>46</sup> Secondly, the various strands of rhetorical criticism outlined in the first part are analysed in terms of their methodological perspective and their understanding of the goal of interpretation. Finally, in response to the current practice(s) of rhetorical criticism in New Testament studies, a proposal is made for a rhetorical-critical theory and practice.

### 3.1. Recent Developments in Rhetorical Criticism in New Testament Studies

James Muilenburg, an Old Testament scholar, is credited with introducing the phrase, 'rhetorical criticism', into 20th century biblical studies with his writings in the mid 1950's.<sup>47</sup> His 1968 Society of Biblical Literature presidential address, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', sounded a clarion call to go beyond form criticism by using rhetorical criticism.<sup>48</sup> He only vaguely defined what he meant, suggesting that the text should be approached as an 'indissoluble whole, an artistic and

---

<sup>46</sup>See also the discussion and references in D.F. Watson and A.J. Hauser, Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method, Biblical Interpretation, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 101-25.

<sup>47</sup>J. Muilenburg, 'A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style', Vetus Testamentum Supplement 1 (1953), pp. 97-111; and 'The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66', in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon, 1956), pp. 5:381-773.

<sup>48</sup>J. Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', JBL 88 (1969), pp. 1-18.



creative unity, a unique formulation'.<sup>49</sup> By adopting this critical perspective, he hoped to find a means to move from the text to 'a raid on the ultimate'.<sup>50</sup>

In this phrase, 'a raid on the ultimate', one gains a glimpse at Muilenburg's understanding of a text and its meaning or sense. As Walter Brueggemann, one of Muilenburg's students, stated in his 1990 Society of Biblical Literature presidential address, 'I suggest that such a formulation bespeaks a kind of untroubled transcendentalism. Of course Muilenburg was not untroubled, and he knew the text was not untroubled. Nonetheless, he moves directly from the text to "the ultimate"'.<sup>51</sup> Rhetorical criticism for Muilenburg is the way one discerns how a text places the reader in the realm of the 'ultimate'.

A similar agenda was proposed for New Testament studies. Amos N. Wilder's classic work published in 1964, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel, introduced a form of rhetorical criticism which emphasized 'not so much...what the early Christians said, as how they said it'.<sup>52</sup> He, however, went further with respect to the text and its form in the preface to the 1971 reprint in which he suggested that scripture's rhetoric was evidence

---

<sup>49</sup>Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism', p. 9.

<sup>50</sup>Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism', p. 18.

<sup>51</sup>W. Brueggemann, 'At the Mercy of Babylon: A Subversive Rereading of the Empire', JBL 110 (1991), pp. 18.

<sup>52</sup>A.N. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel (London: SCM, 1964), p. 10.

of a particular and peculiar language event which, to use Muilenburg's terms, raided the ultimate by putting the reader in touch with the transcendent.<sup>53</sup>

Robert Funk took the insights of Wilder and gave them a specific application to the parable and the epistle in his book, Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God.<sup>54</sup> In Funk's analysis, the parable is understood as a metaphor; the letter, as an oral conversation. In both instances, according to Funk, the form creates a language event in which a fresh experience or understanding of ultimate reality occurs. Funk's understanding of text and its meaning or sense is articulated in that phase of biblical theology known as the 'New Hermeneutic'.<sup>55</sup> As a result of Wilder and Funk, there emerged a number of critical treatments of the New Testament that discuss the rhetoric of the text in terms of literary critical theory and modern linguistics.<sup>56</sup>

Rhetorical criticism in New Testament studies, however, is better known for that critical perspective

---

<sup>53</sup>A.N. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971 reprint).

<sup>54</sup>R.W. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

<sup>55</sup>J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb, Jr., The New Hermeneutic, New Frontiers in Theology 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

<sup>56</sup>For example, W.A. Beardslee, Literary Criticism of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), and D.O. Via, Jr., The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967). See also a later publication, R.A. Spencer, ed., Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism, Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1980).



initiated by H.D. Betz.<sup>57</sup> In this same vein is the well-known classicist, G.A. Kennedy, whose book, New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism, is now a watershed manual in New Testament rhetorical criticism. Both Betz and Kennedy<sup>58</sup> attempt to show how the New Testament texts are examples of the art of ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric and/or function in a manner similar to ancient rhetorical categories.<sup>59</sup> Kennedy states the rhetorical critical task as follows:

What we need to do is try to hear his [Paul's] words as a Greek-speaking audience would have heard them, and that involves some understanding of classical rhetoric...The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author's intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience.<sup>60</sup>

From this perspective, the New Testament supposedly was written and read in the context of Greco-Roman rhetoric and one can reconstruct that historical dimension in the text by identifying the classical-rhetorical units, classifying them, and thereby discerning their rhetorical function and

---

<sup>57</sup>See Introduction, section 2.2.

<sup>58</sup>It is important to note that Mitchell, Paul, pp. 7-19, as a student of Betz begins to distance her purely historical rhetorical criticism from Kennedy, who she feels has been influenced by the New Rhetoricians, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca.

<sup>59</sup>This approach is severely questioned in several important recent essays: C.J. Classen, 'St. Paul's Epistles', pp. 265-91; Porter, 'The Theoretical Justification', pp. 100-122; and J.T. Reed, 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre', in Rhetoric and the New Testament, pp. 292-324.

<sup>60</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 10, 12; see also, Mitchell, Paul, pp. 7-19.

intent in relation to the original situation, the original author, and the original audience.

Wilhelm Wuellner made a startling breakaway from this historical/classical rhetorical criticism of the New Testament in his now landmark article of 1987, 'Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?'.<sup>61</sup> Drawing on the theories of Chaim Perelman's 'New Rhetoric', the various disciplines of linguistics, literary theory, and various other approaches to language and texts, Wuellner posits a form of rhetorical criticism that corresponds with the movement for a rhetoric revalued or rhetoric reinvented.<sup>62</sup> From this perspective, rhetoric is understood as a practical performance of power inseparable from the social relations in which both the rhetorical act is situated and the rhetorical critic is situated. Wuellner states his position as follows:

...as rhetorical critics (rhetorics as part of literary theory) we face the obligation of critically examining the fateful interrelationship between (1) a text's rhetorical strategies, (2) the premises upon which these strategies operate (gender in patriarchy or matriarchy; race in social, political power structures), and (3) the efficacy of both text and its interpretation; of both exegetical practice and its theory (= method).<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>Wuellner, 'Where?', pp. 448-63. It is curious that even in this article there is an endorsement of the work of G.A. Kennedy as a foundation for expanding the notion of rhetorical criticism, a perspective that Wuellner has since abandoned.

<sup>62</sup>The fullest statement of Wuellner's understanding of rhetorical criticism is articulated in Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', pp. 1-54.

<sup>63</sup>Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', p. 38.



While Wuellner's definition of rhetoric is far from clear, his move away from rhetoric as a way to 'raid the ultimate' or as a way to excavate the historical meaning is obvious.

### 3.2. An Analysis of the Interpretative Goals of Rhetorical-Critical Approaches to the New Testament

The above discussion suggests there are at least three different rhetorical-critical approaches to the New Testament.<sup>64</sup> Each one of them provides a particular reading of texts with a distinct and different emphasis. In this section, each of these three rhetorical approaches is analysed in terms of their understanding of the interpretative goal(s).

The first rhetorical critical approach is the historically based rhetorical criticism. Since the historical paradigm still governs exegesis of the New Testament in the guild of New Testament studies,<sup>65</sup> it is

---

<sup>64</sup>There are in fact others, most of which are amalgamations of the above: K. Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament' ANRW II,25.2 (1984), pp. 1031-1432, provides a curious catalogue of 'rhetorical' forms which is a mixture of ancient rhetoric and modern biblical genre analysis; B.C. Johanson, To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians, Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series 16 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), combines Kennedy with text-linguistics; Jewett, Thessalonian, is a mixture of classical rhetoric, New Rhetoric and linguistic analysis; Mack, Rhetoric, offers an eclectic combination of classical rhetoric, New Rhetoric and sociological analysis; and V.K. Robbins, Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), provides a combination of traditional biblical comparative criticism with a socio-rhetoric understanding of literature extracted from modern social and literary theory, but his 'method' has not been applied to the epistles.

<sup>65</sup>See the discussion in R. Morgan with J. Barton, Biblical Interpretation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 44-200.

not surprising that the historically based rhetorical criticism practised by Betz and Kennedy dominates most rhetorical-critical studies of the New Testament.<sup>66</sup> This stream of rhetorical criticism seeks to correlate the text with its supposed original historical context, specifically ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric.

This particular approach is interested in reconstructing the rhetorical form and function of the biblical text in its historically understood and reconstructed situation. The text is analysed as a piece of ancient hellenistic rhetoric according to the historical-rhetorical categories gleaned from ancient rhetorical handbooks and ancient rhetorical compositions.<sup>67</sup> The rhetoric of the text, from this historical perspective, is a recovery of the original author's use of Greco-Roman rhetoric to persuade the original readers in the context of the original historical setting or rhetorical situation.

There are, however, two different historically based rhetorical-critical perspectives. The 'Betz' school sees Greco-Roman rhetorical analysis as one part of a complete package of historical criticism. As Mitchell states,

---

<sup>66</sup>See Stamps, 'Rhetorical Criticism', pp. 272-74, for a fuller discussion of how rhetorical criticism has been assimilated into the historical-critical method.

<sup>67</sup>Mitchell, Paul, pp. 8, 9: 'In reconstructing the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition for comparison with New Testament texts it is imperative that the ancient rhetorical handbooks not be the sole source...The directions which the rhetorical handbooks provide must always be tempered and compared with actual speeches and other rhetorical compositions from the Greco-Roman world, so that the fluidity and variety of possibilities of rhetorical composition in Greco-Roman antiquity can be brought to bear on the analysis'.



'Rhetorical Criticism, as here understood, is one of the panoply of tools which bear the name "historical-critical method"'.<sup>68</sup> The second historically based perspective, the 'Kennedy' school, while remaining resolutely historical in perspective, seeks to restate the interpretative goal in exclusively rhetorical terms, and according to classical or Greco-Roman rhetorical terms at that, focusing on the verbal reality of the text and its original persuasive power in its original historical context:

Rhetoric cannot describe the historical Jesus or identify Matthew or John; they are probably irretrievably lost to scholarship. But it does study a verbal reality, our text of the Bible, rather than the oral sources standing behind that text, the hypothetical stages of its composition, or the impersonal workings of social forces, and at its best it can reveal the power of those texts as unitary messages.<sup>69</sup>

A second rhetorical-critical approach used in New Testament studies is less historically based, at least in terms of its interpretative goal. Wilder and Funk with their strategy for 'raiding the ultimate', see the rhetoric of the text in transcendental terms. Rhetoric for them begins by isolating the configuration of the author's message in a particular form, a form which can be categorized according to form or genre criticism. The rhetorical effect is the manner in which this configuration creates a language event for the modern reader that takes the modern reader into the realm of the 'transcendent'. The rhetoric of the text is designed to lead the reader beyond the text.

---

<sup>68</sup>Mitchell, Paul, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 158-59.

A third rhetorical-critical perspective practised in New Testament studies is advocated in the work of W. Wuellner.<sup>70</sup> Wuellner advocates the priority of rhetoric over hermeneutics. This reprioritisation not only constitutes the re-invention of rhetoric, but also the complete abandonment of the interpretative task as presently practised in New Testament studies:

It made a revolutionary difference to take the familiar notion, that human beings in general, and religious persons in particular, are hermeneutically constituted, and replace it with the ancient notion familiar to Jews and Greeks alike, that we are rhetorically constituted. We have not only the capacity to understand the content or propositions of human signs and symbols (=hermeneutics); we also have the capacity to respond and interact with them (=rhetorics).<sup>71</sup>

For Wuellner and others like him, the rhetoric of a text is the power of a text to effect, in Kenneth Burke's terms, social identification and transformation in every act of reading.<sup>72</sup> The operative rhetoric is dependent upon the immediate social context of any reading (whether ancient or

---

<sup>70</sup>Application of this rhetorical perspective to biblical texts without necessarily representing Wuellner's theory are, F. Siegert, Argumentation bei Paulus: gezeigt an Röm 9-11, WUNT, 34 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985); A.C. Wire, The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul's Rhetoric (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990), both use the New Rhetoric of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca; E.A. Castilli, Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), uses Foucault.

<sup>71</sup>Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', p. 38.

<sup>72</sup>K. Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1950), pp. 49-59.



modern) and of the readers, emphasizing the ideology of the text as a practical exercise of power.<sup>73</sup>

All three rhetorical-critical perspectives discussed above represent three very different understandings of the interpretative goal defined in terms of rhetoric. Rhetoric can be understood as historically situated, or transcendentally situated, or practically and socially conditioned at the time of reading. In all three cases, the rhetoric of the text is related to the effect of the text upon the critically designated reader.

### 3.3. A Proposal for a Rhetorical Critical Approach to the New Testament

After this survey and analysis of three different rhetorical-critical approaches to the New Testament presently being practised in the guild of New Testament studies, it remains to offer an understanding of what is meant by 'rhetorical' in this study. The proposal which follows is not meant as an effort to provide a definitive and comprehensive method of rhetorical criticism or biblical criticism that meets all the peculiar interpretative demands of the New Testament. The proposal is meant to outline the interpretative task and goal operative in this critical exercise. First, certain ideas about the nature and scope of rhetoric in texts are explored. Then, based on these ideas about rhetoric,

---

<sup>73</sup>Wuellner's definition of rhetoric is far from clear. W. Wuellner, personal letter, 'What I find myself doing is avoiding the conventional approach of moving from theory to practice; from definition to application. Instead, I want to move toward a theory and with it a definition of rhetoric (and hermeneutic) which arises from practice'.

several possible rhetorical critical strategies are suggested.

### 3.3.1. The Nature and Scope of Rhetoric in Texts

Historically, rhetoric has been understood as an act of persuasion.<sup>74</sup> In that sense rhetoric is an action and a theory about how to achieve that action. It is in these terms that Chaim Perelman's theory of the 'New Rhetoric' focuses on rhetoric as argumentation, with the argumentative goal being to 'induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented for its assent'.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, T. Eagleton's literary theory suggests that rhetoric is concerned with the kinds of effects which discourses produce and how they produce them.<sup>76</sup> In both instances, texts are conceived as forms of power and performance 'at the point of consumption'. Rhetorical criticism, then, seeks to lay bare both the means of power and the ways of the performance, to expose the kinds of effects a discourse produces and how they are produced.

The words 'power', 'performance', and 'effect' suggest a possible way to understand the distinct nature of rhetoric and to clarify the relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric, a much needed area of re-

---

<sup>74</sup>Two histories of rhetoric from different perspectives are Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', pp. 2-29; B. Vickers, In Defense of Rhetoric (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 1-479.

<sup>75</sup>Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup>Eagleton, Literary Theory, p. 205.



exploration.<sup>77</sup> Wuellner's separation of rhetoric from hermeneutics and the prioritizing of rhetoric over hermeneutics is perhaps a bit extreme.<sup>78</sup> But rhetoric is distinct from the inter-subjectivity of understanding as commonly conceived in hermeneutics and more directly related to what D. Klemm calls the 'hermeneutics of existence'.<sup>79</sup> M.J. Hyde and C.R. Smith make a provocative suggestion along these lines:

The primordial function of rhetoric is to 'make-known' meaning both to oneself and to others. Meaning is derived by a human being in and through the interpretative understanding of reality. Rhetoric is the process of making-known that meaning... Ontologically speaking, rhetoric shows itself in and through the various ways understanding is interpreted and made known... If the hermeneutical situation is the 'reservoir' of meaning, then rhetoric is the selecting tool for making known this meaning.<sup>80</sup>

This explanation of the relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric, particularly the idea of rhetoric as making known meaning to oneself and to others, pinpoints the social dimension of rhetoric. In Mikhail Bakhtin's terms, this means rhetorical criticism as a way of reading is not a 'dialogic relationship with an object'.<sup>81</sup> Rhetorical reading constitutes the

---

<sup>77</sup>See Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', pp. 1-54; and H. Geissner, 'Rhetorik und Hermeneutik', Rhetorik 4 (1985), pp. 85-100.

<sup>78</sup>Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', pp. 29-38.

<sup>79</sup>Klemm, Hermeneutical Inquiry, pp. 2:1-6.

<sup>80</sup>M.J. Hyde and C.R. Smith, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen but Unobserved Relationship', The Quarterly Journal of Speech 65 (1979), pp. 348, 354.

<sup>81</sup>M. Bakhtin, Speech Genres and Other Late Essays, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 8, trans. by V.W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 144.

confrontation between 'two consciousnesses and two subjects', which creates 'contextual meaning' that requires a responsive understanding and includes evaluation.<sup>82</sup> An illustration of this is suggested by Walter Brueggemann in his comments on the texts regarding Babylon in the Old Testament: 'In each case the text is a deliberate act of combat against other views of public reality which live through other forms of rhetoric'.<sup>83</sup> Keeping in mind the social context, J. Habermas suggests that such rhetorical power works because there exists a community convention to utilize and manipulate in the sphere both of meaning and of expression.<sup>84</sup> Part of the rhetorical power of a text is its ability to utilize convention, either by following or flaunting such convention, in order to construct or identify a social reality in each linguistic moment.<sup>85</sup> Rhetorical criticism, then, requires an explication of a text's performance as part of the construction of a social reality and as a means to challenge social conventions.

The social dimension of the rhetoric of texts raises the question of the evaluative function of rhetorical

---

<sup>82</sup>Bakhtin, Speech, pp. 111, 125; also Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', p. 23.

<sup>83</sup>Brueggemann, 'At the Mercy of Babylon', p. 18.

<sup>84</sup>J. Habermas, 'On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality', in The Hermeneutics Reader, ed. K. Mueller-Vollmer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 294-319.

<sup>85</sup>The relationship of discourse (verbal and textual) to social reality is a complex debate. An interesting contribution to the debate is M. McGuire, 'The Structural Study of Speech', in Explorations in Rhetoric, ed. R.E. McKerrow (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman and Company, 1982), pp. 1-22. See also Jeanrond, Theological, pp. 67-68, 105-10.



criticism. Rhetoric recognizes that no discourse is objectively neutral. The humanistic reconception and revival of rhetoric along the lines found in Brian Vicker's, In Defense of Rhetoric, and even Perelman's, The New Rhetoric, is romantically naive about the ideological, even the theological nature, of all discourse.<sup>86</sup> Instead, rhetorical criticism must employ a Platonic suspicion of rhetoric in texts; yet, at the same time, it must accept the fact that all texts (including the critic's sub-texts) as rhetoric are authoritative power performances with distinct ideological effects. This evaluative side of rhetoric demands that the ethics of interpretation become a forthright aspect of critical dialogue. Rhetorical criticism, then, requires that a text and its interpretation be accountable for their ethical consequences and political functions.<sup>87</sup>

Rhetoric is an aspect of all discourse. Rhetoric is both the ways and means a text produces its effects and the kinds of effects a text produces. Rhetoric is not merely about formal and ornamental argumentation, but about argumentation as one aspect of the persuasive power of a text. Furthermore, all texts are rhetorical in that all texts are ideological: they are the imposition of a social

---

<sup>86</sup>The ideology of all texts is explored in G. Kress and R. Hodge, Language as Ideology (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), and Jameson, The Political Unconscious. For application to biblical studies, see Jobling and Pippin, Ideological Criticism.

<sup>87</sup>An advocacy and example of this stance is admirably put forth by E. Schüssler Fiorenza, 'The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship', JBL 107 (1988), pp. 3-17; see also Jeanrond, Theological, pp. 110-11, 116-18.

construct of reality upon the reader. Rhetorical criticism, then, is not the cold, objective analysis of forms of arguments and the truth or non-truth of their conclusions, but the exposure and the critical evaluation of a text's means to power and of a text's ideological presumption.<sup>88</sup>

### 3.3.2. Rhetorical-Critical Interpretative Strategies

Rhetoric and rhetorical criticism as conceived above negate any effort to establish a singular, definitive rhetorical-critical method. There are many different rhetorical-critical perspectives and methods one could adopt to assess the way a text creates its effect and the effect a text creates. With this broad rhetorical-critical goal in view, Wuellner is correct to state, 'Rhetorical criticism is not a set of analytical techniques, not a set of approaches or methods of interpretation, which when applied, will produce interpretations or solve interpretative problems'.<sup>89</sup> Rhetorical criticism as a critical discourse based on a theory of rhetoric, however, provides a way to establish various interpretative strategies or various readings of a text.

One particular interpretative strategy is based on what H. Lausberg calls the aptum.<sup>90</sup> The aptum is a term which designates rhetoric's concern for the relationships

---

<sup>88</sup>The most helpful discussion and application of this understanding of rhetoric is found in D. Jasper, Rhetoric, Power and Community: An Exercise in Reserve (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

<sup>89</sup>Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', p. 33.

<sup>90</sup>Lausberg, Handbuch, pp. 1:54ff. and 258.



which exist between the speaker, the speech, and the audience, for which one can substitute the communication coordinates author, text, and reader. These relationships can be stated as follows: the relationship between speaker/author and speech content/text, the relationship between speaker/author and audience/reader, and the relationship between speech content/text and audience/reader.<sup>91</sup> What a theory of rhetoric would suggest is that these relationships are inscribed or entextualized in every text. Part of the rhetoric of a text, then, is the way the text creates, establishes and utilizes these relationships to persuade the audience/reader. In addition, as seen from Jakobson's communication model, a critic who adopts the rhetorical-critical stance reads a text by constructing or reconstructing the aptum and from that analyzes and evaluates the effects which discourses produce and how they produce them.<sup>92</sup> A rhetorical critic should be sensitive to both the rhetorical dynamics of the aptum inscribed in the text and in the critic's own critical stance with respect to the communication situation.

Besides the aptum, Greco-Roman rhetorical theory posits the role of ethos, logos, and pathos as aspects of the persuasive nature of communication. Ethos refers to

---

<sup>91</sup>Jeanrond, Theological, p. 111, the aptum is similar to what Jeanrond labels, 'the conditions of communication in which text and reader meet'

<sup>92</sup>This is an example of the tension between the critic as a reader and the reader as a critical construct as discussed in footnote 9. The relationship between the text and the reader as a critical construct is discussed in sections 4.1.3 and 4.2.3.

the speaker's appeal to his own moral character and other aspects of his life which enhance the speaker's credibility.<sup>93</sup> Logos refers to the modes of reasoning used within a speech such as induction or deduction.<sup>94</sup> Pathos refers to the emotional reaction of the audience as a means of persuasion or proof.<sup>95</sup> Theoretically, each of these corresponds with the respective communication coordinates, ethos with the speaker, logos with the speech or discourse, and pathos with the audience. Consequently, rhetorical criticism maintains that all communication has these argumentative appeals. There is no communication without all three elements of ethos, logos, and pathos.<sup>96</sup> This understanding of rhetorical appeals being a part of all texts challenges the idea that argumentation can be separated from presentation, or that content (verba) can be separated from form (res). If one cannot separate content from its presentation, there is no longer any necessary prioritizing of philosophy or logos over rhetoric.<sup>97</sup> Rhetorical criticism, then, encourages the exposure of the

---

<sup>93</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1.2.1356a.3-4, 1.8.1366a.6; Cicero, De Oratore 2.43.182-84; Quintilian, Institutio oratoria 6.2.8-19.

<sup>94</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.2.1356b.8; Cicero, De Inventione 1.31-41.

<sup>95</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.2.1356a.3, 5; Cicero, De Oratore 2.42.178, 2.44.185-87; Quintilian, Institutio oratoria 6.2.20-24.

<sup>96</sup>See Brandt, Rhetoric of Argumentation; E.P.J Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 3d ed.); Leith and Myerson, The Power of Address; W. Nash, Rhetoric: The Wit of Persuasion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>97</sup>Vickers, In Defense, pp. 148-213, also Wuellner, 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics', pp. 24-33.



various kinds of argumentation or persuasive techniques associated with (but not necessarily defined by) the terms ethos, logos, and pathos.

The use of the aptum and the three modes of persuasion are only two ways in which rhetorical theory suggests interpretative strategies or ways to evaluate the text critically. Another strategy is examining the structure or arrangement of a text. The structure or arrangement of texts can be contrasted with the disposition of rhetorical arguments as suggested by Greco-Roman rhetorical theory: a speech has the basic pattern of exordium, narratio, confirmatio, and conclusio.<sup>98</sup> The effect of text based on its structure or arrangement also can be evaluated against the genres or species of classical rhetoric: judicial, deliberative, and epideictic.<sup>99</sup> Another way to evaluate the effect of texts is using the rhetorical theory of style which pertains to the selection of words and how word groups are put together.<sup>100</sup> The point is that these theories of ancient rhetoric provide a way to classify the

---

<sup>98</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric 3.13.4; Cicero, De Oratore 2.80.326; Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 3.9.1-5. For secondary discussions, Mack, Rhetoric, pp. 41-43, Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 23-25, and Watson, Invention, pp. 20-21; and Hughes, Early, pp. 32-43.

<sup>99</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1.3.1358b.3, 1359a.9; Cicero, De Inventione 1.5.7, 2.4.12-59.178; De Oratore 2.81.333-85.349; Quintilian, Institutio oratoria 2.21.23, 3.3.14-15, 3.4. See secondary discussions in Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 19-20; Watson, Invention, pp. 9-10.

<sup>100</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric 3.1-12; Cicero, De Oratore 3.5.19-20.73, 3.25-27, 3.37-55; Quintilian, Institutio oratoria, 8-9. See secondary discussions in Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 25-30; Watson, Invention, pp. 22-6. An example of rhetorical-criticism based on style, Porter, 'Theoretical Justification', pp. 116-22.

organization and the potential effect(s) of a text. As categories they provide heuristic devices or classificatory rubrics rather than theoretical absolutes concretized in their historical formulations by ancient Greco-Roman rhetoricians.<sup>101</sup> The work of the New Rhetoricians has shown how these classical theories can be expanded, if redefined, by modern philosophical and linguistic discussion.<sup>102</sup>

In summary of the above, what is meant by rhetorical criticism? It is the attempt to analyze, interpret, or read a literary text by analysing the text in terms of the inscribed three relationships of the aptum within the context of a defined rhetorical situation in order to uncover the persuasive effect(s) a text creates. It is also the evaluation of the ways a text presents its argumentation or persuasive appeals whether explicitly or implicitly, whether formally or indirectly. Simply put, it examines the way discourses are constructed and operate to create certain effects.

### 3.3.3. Rhetoric and the Reading Process

When the ancient theoreticians discussed rhetoric, the element that received primary attention was the speaker. This was because rhetoric was perceived distinctly as 'that quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish his purposes', or the methods and devices by which a speaker crafts the speech to accomplish a certain

---

<sup>101</sup>See the references in footnote 58.

<sup>102</sup>Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, passim; Brandt, Rhetoric of Argumentation, pp. 24-69; E. Black, Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 10-90.



purpose.<sup>103</sup> Modern discussions regarding rhetoric have switched the focus. With rhetoric perceived as an integral component of all aspects of human discourse,<sup>104</sup> the focus shifts from how the speaker constructs a speech in order to persuade, to how the discourse employs strategies 'whereby the interest, values, or emotions of an audience are engaged by any speaker or writer through his discourse'.<sup>105</sup> As discussed above, rhetorical criticism is a critical perspective that seeks to analyse and evaluate a discourse with respect to the ways a discourse achieves particular effects.

Rhetoric, from this newer perspective, which shifts the focus from the speaker to the text, becomes particularly sensitive to the coordinates of the communication event. In fact, Aristotle, in his work, Rhetoric, identified the elements in the speech-act as speaker, speech, and hearer, which corresponds with Jakobson's communication coordinates, author, text, and reader.<sup>106</sup> These coordinates also correspond with the elements that have been identified in the rhetorical concept, the aptum, discussed above. The aptum, however, refers more specifically to the relationship among the three basic constituents of rhetoric which Aristotle identified than to the coordinates themselves.

---

<sup>103</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. 'Rhetoric', by T.O. Sloan and Ch. Perelman, p. 799.

<sup>105</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Rhetoric', p. 799.

<sup>106</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.3.1358a.

If one transposes the constituent elements of rhetoric to the act of reading, the rhetoric of a reading act includes the effect produced by the relationships between author, text, and reader. A critic who adopts the rhetorical-critical stance analyses and evaluates the effects which the text produces and how it produces them by reconstructing the aptum inscribed, and thereby operative, in the text. What makes the rhetorical-critical perspective potentially effective is that it recognizes that the communication event is altered when an aspect of the aptum or one of the reading coordinates changes or is construed differently by the critic. This is particularly so with ancient texts like the biblical text as there are several ways to configure the communication coordinates.

First, one can do a historical-rhetorical reading of the text. This corresponds with the work of Kennedy and Betz, who use a repristination of ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical theory to interpret the New Testament text. From this perspective, the rhetoric of the text is judged according to the reconstructed aptum or communication coordinates of (1) the historical author, (2) the original audience, and (3) the historical situation. As stated above, this does not essentially differ from the historical-critical method. What differs is the evaluative perspective or interpretative goal-- one is historical-theological, the other is historical-rhetorical.

Alternatively, the rhetoric of the text can be evaluated from a literary perspective, or what might be labelled a literary-rhetorical reading. This perspective



constructs the entextualized communication coordinates as literary presentations without necessary recourse to a full-blown historical reconstruction. This literary emphasis operates with the following model: (1) the implied author, (2) the implied reader, and (3) the literary context as the focus of the rhetorical effect.<sup>107</sup>

In summary, what is particular about a rhetorical reading is that it uses the rhetorical perspective as a way to interpret or read the text. As rhetoric was defined above, this means that a critic reads a text to discover the kinds of effects a text creates and the ways a text achieves those particular effects. The particular effect which a rhetorical critic is interested in, based on the discussion above, is the way a text attempts to impose its ideology upon the reader or audience or the way a text attempts to persuade the reader to assent to the theses presented in the discourse. The aptum concept provides an important means to evaluate the ways a text creates its rhetorical effect, because a crucial part of a text's argumentative strategy is the way in which the relationships between the author, text, and reader inscribed in the text create the rhetorical situation of reading.

### 3.4. A Rhetorical Approach to 1 Corinthians

If one applies this understanding of rhetoric to the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, several rhetorical dimensions emerge. First, ideologically, 1 Corinthians

---

<sup>107</sup>The literary perspective and the literary terms are defined in detail below, section 4.

represents a textual communication via a letter from a religious leader, named 'Paul' (1.1), to a religious community, 'the church of God in Corinth' (1.2). The opening and closing of the letter represent, respectively, the introduction and the conclusion. In both, certain religious concepts are presented as facets of the letter's message. Part of the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians is the manner in which these religious concepts are presented in the text in order to gain the assent of the audience to these concepts.<sup>108</sup>

The second dimension pertains to recognizing the way the aptum is entextualized in the epistolary form of 1 Corinthians. With respect to the letter tradition, the elements of the aptum are as follows: the author is the sender; the reader is the addressees or the recipients; the text is the letter; the context is the epistolary situation. Part of the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians is the way the epistolary form and the letter text establish the relationship between the sender and addressees, or, to state it otherwise, the way the relational interplay between the sender and the letter-text (or content), between the sender and the addressees, and between the letter-message (or content) and the addressees, is promoted in and by the text.

As illustrated above, there are several ways a rhetorical critic can interpret the configuration of the

---

<sup>108</sup>The distinctive nature of discourse using religious language is noted in Leith and Myerson, Power of Address, pp. 17-22, 131-37; Jasper, Rhetoric, passim; Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric, esp. pp. 120-60.



aptum. In this study, the rhetorical reading uses a literary perspective that corresponds to the set of coordinates described above as: (1) implied author, (2) implied reader or audience, and (3) the literary context. It remains then to define these literary coordinates and to specify how they operate within a literary context to help to create a rhetorical effect.

#### 4. The Literary Dimension

By using the term, 'reading', to describe an interpretation of a text, one acknowledges that every reading is dependent upon the critic's configuration of the reading coordinates of, author, text, reader, and context. A rhetorical-critical reading is interested in the effect a text creates, specifically the way a text is instrumental in persuading an audience toward an ideological stance, and how that effect is produced by the aptum or through the relationship of the reading coordinates promoted by the text. It is possible to interpret the rhetorical effect of the aptum from several different perspectives, such as the historical or the literary. In this study the rhetoric of the aptum will be analysed from a literary perspective.

To speak of a literary perspective is to speak of a wide range of textual understandings or to speak of a number of different understandings of textuality.<sup>109</sup> The

---

<sup>109</sup>Technical discussion of textuality can be found in, Jeanrond, Text, pp. 74-100; Theological, pp. 71-92. A more literary approach to the issues of textuality is R. Cooper, 'Textualizing Determinacy/Determining Textuality', Semeia 62 (1993), pp. 3-18. The theological implications of textuality are explored in C.E. Winquist, ed., Text and Textuality, Semeia, 40 (Atlanta, : Scholars Press, 1987).

literary perspective as used in this study concentrates on three dimensions of textuality. There is, first, a text's relationship to its textual tradition (often referred to as genre) and its use of that tradition's conventions. Secondly, there is the pre-understanding that a text is a coherent structure in its final form. Thirdly, a text represents a textual or literary presentation of the communication coordinates, that is the rhetorical aptum. Fourthly, a text presents a literary inscription of the situation. Each of these will be discussed below, and then it will be shown how they relate to the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians.

#### 4.1. The Literary Dimensions of Textuality

##### 4.1.1. The Literary Context: The Literary Tradition

First, the concept of textuality recognizes that a text is situated within a literary tradition; it has a literary context beyond the text itself. This affirms that a text operates within a larger communicative system so that its textuality represents its similarity to and difference from other texts.<sup>110</sup> While interpreting a text against its literary context is not determinative, such an analysis can provide valuable insights into the way a text creates its effect. In particular, an interpretative tension emerges when a text appears to be manipulating its textual tradition with its conventions, whether that manipulation is by conscious design of the author or a

---

<sup>110</sup>T. Hawkes, Structuralism and Semiotics, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 59-122; Culler, Structuralist Poetics, pp. 131-60; cf. Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, pp. 226-37.



product of the reader's interpretation. There often exist literary forms, or genres to use the more familiar word, that readers utilize in their reading in order to 'decode' a text's performance.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, the recognition that writers write in response to all that has gone before, or out of the pool of intertextuality, provides a means to gain access to the literary devices or techniques that go to make up the text's effect.<sup>112</sup> Understanding a text's literary context is one means for helping to create structural relationships beyond the particular text for the critical reading and evaluation of it. But positing such a literary context neither determines meaning simply by finding analogous textual devices in textual precursors, nor dictates the genesis of the text and thereby determines the function of any given device embodied in the text. Reading a text against its literary context is simply a way to assess critically the effect a text may create by its relationship (whether through similarities or differences) with a literary tradition.

---

<sup>111</sup>Culler, Structuralist Poetics, pp. 113-60; Barton, Reading, pp. 10-17, though his theory of 'literary competence' based on genre recognition is too narrow of a principle.

<sup>112</sup>Culler, Structuralist Poetics, pp. 113-60. Intertextuality can be defined as follows, M.C. Taylor, 'Deconstruction: What's the Difference?', Soundings 66 (1983), p. 400, 'texts are necessarily intertextual...Since each text becomes itself in relation to other texts, no text is self-contained. There can no more be a text-in-itself than there can be independent signifiers. Texts, like the signs which comprise them, ceaselessly cross and criss-cross in a perpetual process of interweaving'.

#### 4.1.2. The Literary Context: the Text Itself

A second aspect of textuality assumed for this study is the acceptance of the final-form of the text as the object of interpretation.<sup>113</sup> The idea of the 'final-form' does not mean that the text is regarded as an autonomous whole whose significance can be determined without any reference outside the text (a point already discussed above). Rather this aspect of textuality establishes a second structural-relational context for the interpretation of a text. A text is itself the composite unity of its structural elements. A complete or coherent text creates a unique, self-contained inter-relational linguistic system.<sup>114</sup> Thus a text presents a temporal and specific

---

<sup>113</sup>A refined literary perspective on the text as an integral and self-referring literary object is offered by R.W. Moberly, At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34 (JSOTSup, 22; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 15-43; Petersen, Literary Criticism, pp. 24-48; M. Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading, Indiana Literary Biblical Series (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 1-57; R. Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981), pp. 3-22; M. Kessler, 'An Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: Prolegomena', Semitics 7 (1980), pp. 1-27.

<sup>114</sup>A textual unit can be approached as a linguistic system, an approach adopted in the field of discourse analysis see R. de Beaugrande and W. Dressler, Introduction to Text Linguistics (London: Longman, 1980); Brown and Yule, Discourse Analysis; with the application to biblical texts explained by P. Cotterell and M. Turner, Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation (London: SPCK, 1989), pp. 230-92; E.A. Nida, J.P. Louw, A.H. Snyman and J.W. Cronje, Style and Discourse with Special Reference to the Text of the Greek NT (Cape Town: Bible Society, 1983); E.V. McKnight, Post-Modern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-Oriented Criticism (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), pp. 115-66; S.E. Porter, Idioms of the Greek New Testament, Biblical Languages: Greek 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, pp. 298-307; S.E. Porter and J.T. Reed, 'Greek Grammar since BDF: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis' Filología Neotestamentaria 4 (1991), pp. 156-63.



process unfolded in the movement of the text from beginning to end.<sup>115</sup> The critical interpretation of how the parts relate to create the whole contributes to the understanding of the text's possible meanings and effects. In turn, the sense of the whole helps to order the various parts.<sup>116</sup>

#### 4.1.3. The Literary Components: The Implied Author, the Implied Reader, and the Literary Situation

A third aspect of textuality with regard to this study relates directly to what has been discussed immediately above concerning the components of the communication event and the aptum. The textual coordinates of the aptum clearly suggest participants in the writing and reading process that are related to but not to be equated with the actual persons in this process. These literary components can be understood in terms of 'fictional' categories. To say they are fictional means that these components emerge from the textual system and operate within the textual system regardless of their referential values in the extra-textual world. They are both products of the whole and

---

<sup>115</sup>M. Perry, 'Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings', Poetics Today 1 (1979), pp. 35-64, 311-61; W. Iser, The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 107-34; S. Mailloux, 'Learning to Read: Interpretation and Reader-Response Criticism', Studies in Literary Imagination 12 (1979), pp. 93-108; R.M. Fowler, 'Who Is "the Reader" in Reader Response Criticism?' Semeia 31 (1985), pp. 19-21; S.D. Moore, Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 87-88, 113-14, 120-21.

<sup>116</sup>This interaction between the whole and the parts is related to the concept of the hermeneutical circle, see A.C. Thiselton, The Two Horizons (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 104-110; D.C. Hoy, The Critical Circle: Literature, History, and Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), *passim*.

parts of the whole. They are literary or textual in that their identity is based on their presentation within the text. The literary components referred to are the implied author, the implied reader, and the literary situation.

#### 4.1.3.1. The Implied Author

The implied author has become a technical term to designate a literary concept that provides a means to understand the communication process between the 'real' author and 'real' reader when a text is the medium.<sup>117</sup> First of all, the implied author is perceived as distinct from the 'real' author. Wayne Booth, in Rhetoric of Fiction, a work which made the term commonplace, stated:

As he [the real author] writes, he creates not simply an ideal, impersonal "man in general" but an implied version of "himself" that is different from the implied authors we meet in other men's works...Whether we call this implied author an "official scribe," or adopt the term recently revived by Kathleen Tillotson--the author's "second self"--it is clear that the picture the reader gets of this presence is one of the author's most important effects. However impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner--and of course that official scribe will never be neutral toward all values. Our reactions to his various commitments, secret or overt, will help to determine our response to the work.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup>Fowler, 'Who Is?', pp. 1-23, esp. 10-15; also S.R. Suleiman, 'Introduction: Varieties of Audience Oriented Criticism', in The Reader in the Text, p. 11, who in referring to the idea of the implied author and reader notes their limited but helpful value: 'They become no more--and no less--than necessary fictions, guaranteeing the consistency of a specific reading without guaranteeing its validity in any absolute sense'.

<sup>118</sup>Booth, Rhetoric, pp. 70-71.



While Booth's and most discussions of the implied author are based on reference to fictional narrative,<sup>119</sup> any literary text that is read in the absence of the 'real' author, in effect, distanced by means of the writing process from the person who wrote it, conveys to a reader a selected and limited impression of the 'real' author via the text, i.e. the implied author.<sup>120</sup> Thus, an aspect of textuality is that a text conveys an image of the 'real' author, which is called the implied author.

The textual presentation of the implied author is part of the means of persuasion found in a text. Part of an author's rhetoric, an appeal to ethos perhaps, is to present the 'self' who serves the work:

...for regardless of how sincere an author may try to be, his different works will imply different versions, different ideal combinations of norms. Just as one's personal letters imply different versions of oneself, depending on the differing relationships with each correspondent and the purpose of each letter, so the writer sets himself out with a different air depending on the needs of particular works.<sup>121</sup>

A reader responds to the textual presentation of the author as a literary-rhetorical figure and constructs the image of

---

<sup>119</sup>Chatman, Story, pp. 147-51; R.A. Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), pp. 15-18, 205-11.

<sup>120</sup>The relationship of the author to the text is a literary and hermeneutical question. For a literary perspective see G. Hermeren, 'Intention and Interpretation in Literary Criticism', New Literary History 7 (1975), pp. 57-82; R. Freedman, 'Intentionality and the Literary Object', Contemporary Literature 17 (1976), pp. 430-52; for a hermeneutical perspective, see Ricoeur, 'Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation', pp. 129-41; and relevant discussions in R.E. Palmer, Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969); Hoy, The Critical Circle.

<sup>121</sup>Booth, Rhetoric, p. 71.

the implied author. In a sense, the reader constructs the implied author while reading and assents to that presentation for the sake of the argument. For the actual readers, the relationship between the implied author and the real author, which may be known from other sources besides the text being read, can be an important interpretative tension. A reader enters into the argument of a text by constructing and accepting the implied author, or a reader may resist the argument of a text by rejecting the image of the 'implied author', but in either case, it is the textual presentation of the implied author to which a reader responds. One rhetorical implication of the implied author is that the selected and limited presentation of the author may be a means of persuasion in the overall argument of the text.

#### 4.1.3.2. The Implied Reader

The implied reader, in a sense, is the mirror of the implied author.<sup>122</sup> Booth explains using a 'universal first person' as the reader:

It is only as I read that I become the self whose beliefs must coincide with the author's. Regardless of my real beliefs and practices, I must subordinate my mind and heart to the book if I am to enjoy it to the full. The author creates, in short, an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement.<sup>123</sup>

Booth's language about the implied reader suggests that the implied reader is someone whom the reader becomes and

---

<sup>122</sup>Fowler, 'Who Is?', p. 13; Chatman, Story, pp. 149-51.

<sup>123</sup>Booth, Rhetoric, p. 138.



someone the author creates. In many ways Booth's two-fold perspective on the implied reader anticipated the present debate among reader-response critics as to where the reader is situated in relation to the text.<sup>124</sup> While this theoretical discussion is focused on narrative, it, like the discussion about the implied author, is applicable to all texts, as Walter J. Ong states (perhaps tilting too much towards the author's intention): 'The historian, the scholar or scientist, and the simple letter writer all

---

<sup>124</sup>The primary debate revolves around Booth, Chatman's application of Booth, Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish. Booth is usually understood to posit a text immanent definition of the implied reader, so Chatman, Story, pp. 150-51; and R. Fowler, 'Who Is?', p. 13. But my reading of Booth suggests he has a more interactive understanding in which the implied reader emerges from the dialectic between the reader and the textual context. Iser, The Act of Reading, esp. pp. 27-38, posits that the implied reader is a product who emerges out of the dynamic act of the reader responding to the textual structure, which elicits the reader's response of entering the world of the text. Iser is not really that different from Booth except that he emphasizes the reader's response to the text, while Booth emphasizes the text's role for the reader. S. Fish, Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 21-67, grants almost complete authority to the reader to construct the text, but the reader is always situated in the context of an 'interpretative community', in effect, crossing-out the concept of the implied reader for the concept of the informed reader. From these perspectives and others, there has emerged a whole host of theories about readers and their relationship to the text, surveyed in Tompkins, Reader Response Criticism; and Suleiman and Crosman, The Reader in the Text. A helpful critique of the use of reader-response criticism in biblical studies is S.E. Porter, 'Why Hasn't Reader-Response Criticism Caught on in New Testament Studies?', Literature and Theology 4 (1990), pp. 278-92; and 'Reader-Response Criticism and New Testament Study: A Response to A.C. Thiselton's New Horizons in Hermeneutics', Literature and Theology 8 (1994), pp. 96-102.

fictionalize their audiences, casting them in a made-up role and calling on them to play the role assigned'.<sup>125</sup>

If one accepts the dialectic model of the reading process, Booth's language remains appropriate: the text entextualizes the author's perspective with regard to the implied reader, to which any 'real' reader responds as a creative, individual reader with his or her own interpretative perspective. Keeping this dialectic approach to the fore, the implied reader can be defined: the implied reader is distinct from the 'real' reader in that it is a literary construct embedded in the text, and it exists as a literary figure to which the 'real' reader responds. From the author's perspective, the implied reader is the reader who assents to the arrangement or argument or rhetoric embodied in the text. Such rhetoric invites the 'real' reader to accept or become the identity of the implied reader for the sake of the argument. Once again an interpretative tension surfaces if the real reader rejects the projected role or identity of the implied reader presented in the text.<sup>126</sup> This interpretative tension suggests a twofold rhetorical nature to the concept of the implied reader: the persuasive or rhetorical aspect of the implied reader resides both in the construction of the implied reader through the temporal reading event and in the attempt to persuade the reader to accept that identity or role.

---

<sup>125</sup>W.J. Ong, 'The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction', PMLA 90 (1975), p. 17.

<sup>126</sup>Chatman, Story, p. 150.



## 4.1.3.3. The Literary Situation

If one grants that part of the rhetoric of any text is the way the presentation of the text governs the reading experience, then part of that rhetoric is the textual presentation of the situation. The situation to which a text refers is governed not only by the actual historical contingencies, but by the entextualized situation and the situation created in the reading process.<sup>127</sup> In a sense, the textual presentation of the situation could be called the 'implied situation'. What this literary perspective on the situation suggests is that every text embodies a selected, limited, and linguistic entextualization of the situation.<sup>128</sup> The rhetoric of the literary situation resides in the fact that this literary presentation of the situation creates the textual situation upon which the argument of a text rests and in which the implied author and implied reader meet.

The concepts of the implied author, the implied reader, and the literary situation are literary figures and devices which help configure the reading act and which illuminate the rhetoric of a text. Chatman has composed a chart that illustrates the relationships among the various

---

<sup>127</sup>For a discourse analysis of context, see Brown and Yule, Discourse Analysis, pp. 27-58; a more literary approach to the reading act as a situation is found in Iser, Act of Reading, pp. 53-85.

<sup>128</sup>H. White, 'The Narrativization of Real Events', in On Narrative, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 249-54; P. Ricoeur, 'The Narrative Function', Semeia 13 (1978), pp. 177-202; R. Pascal, 'Narrative Fictions and Reality: A Comment on Frank Kermode's The Sense of an Ending', Novel 11 (1977), pp. 40-50.

components of a narrative text.<sup>129</sup> Central to that chart is a box labelled the 'narrative text'; inside the box from left to right are the narrative components, implied author, narrator, narratee, and implied reader; outside the box at the respective ends, the real author and real reader. This box illustrates the fact that the real author and reader encounter each other via the text and through the textually presented figures of the implied author and the implied reader,<sup>130</sup> and to which this study adds, the implied or literary situation. R. Fowler comments about the usefulness of this understanding of these literary concepts: 'it recognizes and provides a rudimentary way to talk about the dialogical process that is built in to the text and demanded by the reading experience'.<sup>131</sup> In effect, the text presents a literary situation in which author and reader meet through their textually created roles. Furthermore, reading a text and participating in its literary configuration--which can be critically defined by the concepts of the implied author and the implied reader--creates a relationship between the author and reader that is located in a literary situation.

#### 4.2. The Literary Dimensions of the Opening and Closing of 1 Corinthians

Having spelt out a theoretical understanding of the literary perspective assumed for this study, it remains to

---

<sup>129</sup>Chatman, Story, p. 151.

<sup>130</sup>Fowler, 'Who Is?', pp. 11-13, analyzes Chatman's box as regards both its problems and its usefulness.

<sup>131</sup>Fowler, 'Who Is?', p. 13.



apply this understanding to the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians. What is the literary context or tradition against which to read the epistolary conventions of 1 Corinthians? How do the parts of these conventions work together to create a literary whole and a rhetorical effect? How are the implied author and the implied reader evident in these epistolary forms? What is the literary situation with respect to 1 Corinthians? What is the potential impact of the orality of the letter upon a literary perspective? How does the literary perspective respect the historicity of the text?

#### 4.2.1. The Literary Tradition as a Literary Context

With regard to the literary context, the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians can be read against two epistolary traditions. The first literary context is the Greco-Roman or hellenistic epistolary tradition, particularly the family or friendly documentary letters.<sup>132</sup> The second literary tradition is the Pauline epistolary tradition established by the corpus of the extant Pauline epistles<sup>133</sup> (for this study, only the generally accepted authentic Pauline epistles will be considered in order to avoid the complexities of authorship and dating related to the so-called inauthentic Pauline epistles<sup>134</sup>). The literary

---

<sup>132</sup>The details of this literary tradition are given in chapter two.

<sup>133</sup>Specific details of this literary tradition is provided in chapter three.

<sup>134</sup>Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 250-52; L.T. Johnson, The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation (London: SCM, 1986), pp. 255-57.

significance of these two contexts emerges from the relational continuity and discontinuity of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians against the letter opening and closing conventions found in these two literary traditions. The literary interpretation at this relational level hinges on a critical understanding of the use and manipulation of the hellenistic epistolary tradition in 1 Corinthians and the similarities and differences of 1 Corinthians when compared against the other authentic Pauline letters. The interplay in the text between the use of literary tradition and convention and the evidence of literary creativity creates an important textually interpretative issue.

#### 4.2.2. The Text as Its Own Context

Besides the relationship of 1 Corinthians with the epistolary traditions, the text of 1 Corinthians creates its own inter-textual relationships. For example, the letter opening can be read by interpreting how the opening parts, sender, addressee, and greeting, relate to create the opening effect, or similarly, the letter closing can be read by examining how the closing elements, final greetings, holy kiss formula, and grace benediction create the closing effect.<sup>135</sup> Further, these epistolary conventions or elements are themselves products of semantic and syntactical relationships that require interpretation, that is, how the words and word groups connect to suggest possible meaning effects. This literary approach is

---

<sup>135</sup>An explanation of the opening parts and their inter-relationship is found in chapter four; an explanation of the closing parts and their inter-relationship in chapter five.



specifically distinct from an historical interpretative strategy, which interprets the particularity of the text against the situation from which the text emerged and to which the text is addressed.<sup>136</sup> This is not to deny the particular historical situation behind a particular text, but an interpretative decision to consider the literary-textual situation as the primary interpretative context.

#### 4.2.3. The Implied Author and the Implied Reader in 1 Corinthians

When one comes to understand the concepts of the implied author and the implied reader in the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, several interesting interpretative facets emerge. For example, in a letter, the implied author is the named sender who, in 1 Corinthians, calls himself 'Paul'. In this letter, the implied author is a construct from all of the information the text provides about 'Paul' and from the textual strategies, the ideological assumptions, the ethical statements, the value judgments, and the rhetorical devices by which the author presents himself. This is in contrast to the 'real' author constructed by historians from the entire Pauline corpus and other information contemporaneous with that corpus. The only author that the 'real' readers of text have access to is the implied author plus the memory of the 'historical' person of the same name with whom some may have had some direct or indirect personal experience. It

---

<sup>136</sup>Fee, Corinthians, pp. 4-15, outlines the use of the historical situation as the interpretative control.

is not always considered in New Testament exegesis that the original 'real' readers did not have access to the entire Pauline corpus and thus to all the data that are assumed in the reconstruction of the 'historical' Paul by modern biblical historical critics.

Similarly, in the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, the named letter recipient(s), 'the church of God which is at Corinth', is the implied reader(s). In the Pauline letters, the implied reader is explicitly constructed and identified by all the descriptions of the letter recipients in the letter and by the use of a narratee, named as 'you' (usually a plural 'you'), addressed in the letter. In the Pauline letters, the implied reader is also the reader, who accepts the identity of 'implied reader' and fully enters into the discourse with all its rhetorical strategies. In historical criticism, the reconstructed original readers are actually historical ideal readers constructed by the critic from the text and extra-textual data.<sup>137</sup> In both instances, whether one is discussing the implied reader or the reconstructed 'historical' reader, the described reader is the product of critical judgment and assessment. Readers who are not the originally named recipients may enter into the identity of the implied reader, but will do so aware that they are reading a letter that was once addressed to someone else.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Porter, 'Why Hasn't?', pp. 280-83, catalogues a number of efforts by biblical critics to use the concept of the implied or ideal reader and shows how, in most every case, the historical concern remains primary.

<sup>138</sup> L. Hartman, 'On Reading Others' Letters', *HTR* 79 (1986), pp. 137-46.



It is important to remember that the relationship between implied readers and original 'real' readers is never one to one. The implied reader is a textual phenomenon; the real reader is a historical phenomenon; and exactly how they converge can only be assessed critically.

In the literary perspective adopted for this study, the concern is to read the text in order to evaluate how the rhetoric of the text works to construct the implied reader, or the identity the text seeks to impose upon the reader. The implied reader in this study is one who is historically situated, as one who was conversant with ancient letter convention and hellenistic Greek. The difference from historical criticism is that the literary perspective of this study seeks to evaluate the presentation of this historically situated 'implied' reader in the text, and not to attempt to extrapolate from the text and extra-textual evidence the actual historical persons who were the original readers.

#### 4.2.4. The Literary Situation for 1 Corinthians

Letters, such as 1 Corinthians, are products of actual correspondence between two human parties. Such letters often refer to the historical or 'actual' contingencies surrounding the reason for writing the letter, including the sender's and recipients' situation at the time of writing. Though such references are explicit historical references, nevertheless, they are linguistically encoded and placed within the context of a larger literary-textual context. The process of entextualizing the 'actual' situation in a letter means the situation becomes a

literary construct or figure or trope which can be extracted from the text.<sup>139</sup> In the case of 1 Corinthians with respect to the situation, the letter refers to the relationship between the sender and recipients, and to specific problems that the letter addresses. A literary approach to the situation first seeks to examine how the situation is presented in the text. Then, this presentation is analysed to see how the situation is used in the text as a rhetorical device to persuade the 'audience' to adhere to the letter's message or argument. For instance, with regards to 1 Corinthians, the literary presentation of the situation can be evaluated as the sender's attempt to persuade the readers to adopt his point of view regarding the relationship between the letter parties and regarding any other issues that impinge upon that relationship. The literary approach to the situation of 1 Corinthians does not deny the efforts of historians to reconstruct the supposed 'actual' historical situation in which the letter was written and to which the letter is addressed. Rather it is a decision to limit the reconstruction of the situation to its literary presentation in the text alone and to understand how that presentation contributes to the rhetorical effect of the text.

---

<sup>139</sup>A detailed explanation of this process is provided in chapter six.



### 4.3. The Literary Perspective and the Historicity of the Text

Though one adopts a literary perspective, it is not necessarily an a-historical perspective. Adopting a literary perspective is a deliberate interpretative strategy that distances the historical aspects of the author, reader, text and situation as interpretative controls. A literary perspective simply does not use historical concerns as the primary entrée into the sense of the text. Yet, there are a number of ways in which the historicity of the text is respected in the literary nature of this study.

First, with respect to the text, the historicity of the text is acknowledged by using the Nestle-Aland 26th revised edition Greek text as the critical text for the study. By using this modern critical edition of the Greek New Testament, one is accepting that the letter was originally written in hellenistic Greek. Hellenistic Greek is a 'dead' language, and any rendering of it is, in a sense, an historical translation or interpretation.<sup>140</sup> In dealing with a text written in hellenistic Greek, then, the critic is entering into a historically conditioned setting.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup>A fuller discussion can be found in D.L. Stamps, 'Interpreting the Language of St. Paul', in Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression and Interpretation, ed. D. Jasper (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 28-30.

<sup>141</sup>S.E. Porter, ed., The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays (JSNTSup, 60; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); also idem, Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood, Studies in Biblical Greek 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 141-56; J.W. Voelz, 'The Language of the New Testament', ANRW II,25.2: 893-977.

A second way the historicity of the text is respected is evident in the attempt to set the text of 1 Corinthians in a literary context or against its literary tradition. With respect to 1 Corinthians, this includes the ancient Greco-Roman world with its epistolary tradition, and the smaller historically preserved ancient epistolary tradition of the authentic Pauline letters. Part of the overt historicity of 1 Corinthians is the fact that the epistolary conventions used are not conventional to modern Western letter form and style. The interest of this study is not the problem these ancient epistolary conventions create for a modern reader, but how the creative adaptation and manipulation of the ancient letter conventions create a rhetorical effect with an audience expecting the traditional use of such conventions.

The historicity of the text is also acknowledged by the critical perception regarding the interpretation of the implied author and the implied reader. This study recognizes that the literary figures of author and reader are not modern, 20th century persons. At certain points it is necessary to draw upon historical data regarding the ancient hellenistic world in order to assess the literary presentation of the implied author and reader in the text. While this study is not particularly concerned to assess how the 'real' readers might have responded to the text, it is concerned to assess how the rhetoric of the text seeks to create and impose the identity of the implied reader upon a reader who was conversant in hellenistic Greek and with ancient epistolary convention. Of course, the same



would apply to any critical reconstruction of the implied author.

##### 5. The Orality of 1 Corinthians as a Literary and Historical Context

Any literary perspective for interpreting the letters of Paul in the New Testament must somehow account for the fact that for many years these letters were primarily read aloud in a public setting.<sup>142</sup> But such a historical fact does not actually impinge upon the literary perspective proposed. Central to a letter is the spacial-temporal distance between the sender and recipient(s): a letter read aloud is the communication event between a writer separated from the letter recipients by time and space through a text representing a prior act of writing to an audience in deferred time and in another place.<sup>143</sup> The rhetor is not the one who reads aloud; the rhetor is the sender, who is only present through the literary presentation labelled the implied author. Equally, the sender in addressing an audience in deferred time and space writes to an audience embodied in the text as the implied reader.

The letter communication as a read aloud event also heightens the importance of literary tradition. Literary forms and conventions aided both the scribe and the audience. Such convention standardized and simplified the

---

<sup>142</sup>P.J. Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity', JBL 109 (1990), pp. 3-27; W. Keblers, The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

<sup>143</sup>Violi, 'Letters', pp. 149-67.

basic communication acts.<sup>144</sup> If a speaker altered and manipulated these conventions in a significant manner, an audience accustomed to hearing standard conventions would note the deviation from the norm.

Also, the reader as listener will experience the text temporally, as it is read aloud from beginning to end.<sup>145</sup> The emphasis on the literary context of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians is in fact an emphasis on the text as it unfolds temporally, with a heightened sensitivity to the reading event as a process. In addition, this attention to the reading event as a process makes a rhetorical reading all the more crucial because analysis of the ways a text creates an effect is equally as important when one considers that the audience does not have the ability to ponder the text by re-reading and by referring backwards in the text to previous statements and arguments.

In summary, there are many different literary perspectives that one could adopt to interpret the Pauline letters and in particular the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians. But as has been discussed, the three aspects of textuality described, (1) the literary tradition or context, (2) the final form of the text, and (3) the literary presentation of the sender as the implied author, the recipient(s) as the implied reader, and the situation, will govern the literary perspective adopted for this study. Adopting a literary perspective does not mean

---

<sup>144</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 27-35, and White, Light, pp. 189-93.

<sup>145</sup>A point brought out by Moore, Literary Criticism, pp. 84-88.



adopting an a-historical perspective (if such a perspective were possible), but rather it means deliberately focusing on the literary presentation of certain aspects of the text. In the end, it is hoped that by using a literary perspective it will be possible to evaluate the way the text works to create certain kinds of rhetorical effects.

#### 6. Conclusion: A Literary-Rhetorical Approach to the Opening and Closing of 1 Corinthians

There are many different ways one could read the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians. Each one of those readings would represent a dialectical process between the text and the reader reading. Each one of those readings would represent an understanding and configuration of the essential communication coordinates, author, text, reader, and context, resident in any communication event. It is the particular concern of this study to offer a literary-rhetorical reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians.

The rhetorical-critical perspective used in this study is essentially an evaluative perspective. It seeks to analyze and assess the persuasive means operative in the text that seek the adherence of the reader/audience to the ideas presented for their assent; and to analyze and assess the kinds of rhetorical effects the discourse produces and how it produces those effects. In particular, this study is interested in the ideological effect of the text and in the relational impact of the text as the speaker and reader meet in the textual situation.

There are many ways to assess the rhetorical effect of a text, but this study is specifically limited to a literary perspective. Using a rhetorical stance, this study specifically seeks to analyze and assess the rhetorical effects created by the textual or literary features of the discourse: (1) the use of and the adaptation and manipulation of both the Greco-Roman and Pauline epistolary tradition, (2) the textual coherence of the letter opening and closing to create a complete literary unit, (3) the literary presentation of both the sender and recipient as the implied author and the implied reader respectively, and (4) the literary presentation of the situation as a rhetorical device. Included in the assessment of these literary dimensions is the examination of the ideological impact of the syntactical presentation of religious ideas and concepts in the letter opening and closing. More specifically with regard to the ideological impact, the question is asked, how certain religious ideas and concepts presented in an epistolary context secure the adherence of the reader to these ideas and concepts.

The letter is a relationally very personal means of communication between two parties. Using the concept of the aptum, the rhetorical nature of the entextualized relationship between the sender and recipients can be assessed, specifically in the way the sender presents himself through the literary concept known as the implied author and in the way the recipient is given an identity or role as the audience through the literary concept known as the implied reader. The epistolary context of the opening



and closing are very explicit in terms of these literary figures because the opening and closing are highly conventional means in which the relationship between the letter parties is addressed.

In addition, the opening and closing are part of the literary presentation of the situation. A letter is an entextualization of the relationship between the sender and recipient. It is an entextualization of ~~the~~ the issues and problems related to that relationship from the past, in the present, and for the future. The literary presentation of the entextualized situation becomes part of the rhetoric of the text in that it contributes to the letter's effort to persuade the reader to a new perspective or understanding.

In summary, this study offers a literary-rhetorical reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians. It is interested in how certain literary facets of the discourse create a rhetorical effect. How are the religious ideas and concepts presented so that the reader is persuaded to accept them? How is the relationship between the letter parties, the sender and recipient(s), affected by how both parties are presented in the text and thereby given specific identities or roles as the basis for the argument of the discourse? What is the rhetorical effect of the use and the creative adaptation of epistolary convention? What rhetorical effect stems from the selected and limited entextualization of the situation from the speaker's point of view?

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ANCIENT LETTER TRADITION IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD AND THE OPENING AND CLOSING CONVENTIONS IN THE EPISTOLARY LITERATURE

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to set the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians in its broad literary context, in the context of the epistolary opening and closing conventions of the hellenistic letter tradition of the first century CE. It is not possible, however, to become so acquainted with the first century CE, socially, culturally, intellectually, etc., that one is able to read the letter as did the original addressee(s).<sup>1</sup> The ability to read the letters as an original addressee entails a fusion of horizons between a reader, text, author, and all levels of context which is arguably impossible from a hermeneutical perspective.<sup>2</sup> Historical familiarity with

---

<sup>1</sup>The goal of bridging the historical gap is stated by many scholars who employ the historical-critical method: Tuckett, Reading, pp. 42: 'The aim of all such work [introductory explanations] is to enable the modern reader to be in as similar position as possible to that of the people for whom the text was first written, so that the author's text can be heard in its original setting'; France, 'Exegesis in Practice', p. 252: 'We are taking "exegesis" to mean the discovery of what the text means in itself, i.e., the original intention of the writer, and the meaning the passage would have held for the readers for whom it was first intended'.

<sup>2</sup>The concept of the horizon of the reader and the text is articulated by H.-G. Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. W. Glen-Doepel, eds. J. Cumming and J.G. Barden (London:



the ancient world and its epistolary conventions is a means of achieving distantiation, a reader's critical recognition of a textual's work autonomy from its author, the original situation, and the original addressees, yet recognizing the text's historicity.<sup>3</sup> Historical familiarity also keeps the interpreter from imposing or assuming his or her own literary context with relation to the text. Such familiarity, however, does not make the reader an ideal reader,<sup>4</sup> but rather an informed reader<sup>5</sup> who uses her or his 'literary competence' to engage with the text while still recognizing the historical gap which remains.<sup>6</sup> In essence, placing the letter-text of 1 Corinthians against its literary context creates an interpretive context for a reader or critic.

In fact, this chapter is an attempt to trace out the conventions of letter writing, especially the opening and closing conventions, in Greco-Roman antiquity in order to investigate the relationship of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians with this literary tradition and context. The goal, though, is to set up an interpretive tension

---

Sheed and Ward, 1975), pp. 271-75. A discussion of the application of Gadamer to biblical interpretation is provided by Thiselton, Two Horizons, pp. 293-326. Significant to both discussions is the recognition that the horizons never fuse.

<sup>3</sup>Jeanrond, Text, pp. 44-46.

<sup>4</sup>For a definition of the ideal reader, see Fowler, 'Who Is?', pp. 15-18.

<sup>5</sup>Fish, Is There a Text, pp. 48-49.

<sup>6</sup>Barton, Reading, pp. 10-17. A better conception of this idea is Culler, Structuralist Poetics, pp. 113-130. Doty, Letters, pp. ix-xi, provides a brief discussion specifically related to ancient letters.

between an informed reader/critic and the text as a basis for reading or interpreting the text, not to establish the originally intended meaning of the text. Underlying this goal are several assumptions. One, the letters of Paul, the commonly accepted authentic ones, date from the first-century CE; and two, the author(s) of the Pauline letters were familiar with the conventions of Greco-Roman letter writing in the first-century CE.<sup>7</sup> The interpretive tension then emerges from the critic's awareness of the relationship between convention and the actual performance, which means the critic assesses the continuity and discontinuity of the Pauline letter event within the context or framework of ancient epistolography at large. A Pauline letter becomes a unique communication event in terms of its conventionality and its deviation from convention as part of a larger epistolary tradition. The interpreter's task is to explore this inter-relationship between the context of ancient epistolography and the particular letter-text.<sup>8</sup>

In order to place the epistolary opening and closing of 1 Corinthians within the ancient epistolary tradition of the Mediterranean world, several facets of this tradition will be surveyed. In the first section, the development of letter writing in the Greco-Roman world will be surveyed. In the second section, the Greek epistolary literature will

---

<sup>7</sup>Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 247-52.

<sup>8</sup>Chapter three will explore the relationship of the Pauline letter tradition to this context, while chapters four and five will particularly explore the relationship of the opening and closing, respectively, to the ancient letter traditions in the Greco-Roman world.



be examined. Thirdly, given the relationship of early Christianity to Judaism and the tendency of some scholars to compare Paul's distinctive epistolary practice to Jewish letters, the Jewish letter tradition will be surveyed. However, as will be established in chapter three, the opening and closing format of Paul's letters primarily mirrors the Greek letter tradition, so that tradition will be surveyed in much greater detail than the Jewish letter tradition. Finally, after examining two epistolary traditions, the general purposes and the communication dynamics of ancient letters will be proposed.

Since this chapter is mainly to set the context for the analysis of 1 Corinthians in chapters four, five, and six, it is primarily a critical engagement with the scholarly<sup>work</sup> which already exists on ancient epistolography.

## 2. The Development of Letter Writing in the Greco-Roman World

Several studies of ancient letters have suggested that the common personal letter was the basis for the development of the epistolary tradition in the Greco-Roman world into the various types of non-personal letters, business, official, literary letters, etc.<sup>9</sup> However, it

---

<sup>9</sup>Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 34-47; N.A. Dahl, 'Letters', in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume (Nashville: Abingdon press, 1976), p. 539. Koskenniemi even suggests that the friendly letter is an expression of the Aristotelean philosophy of the idea of community. P. Dion, 'The Aramaic "Family Letter" and Related Epistolary Forms in Other Oriental Languages and in Hellenistic Greek', Semeia 22 (1982), pp. 68-69, provides evidence that the Greek 'family' or personal letter in form and convention was influenced by Egyptian epistolary practice, which further suggests the Greek personal letter is not the sole basis for the epistolary tradition in the Greco-Roman world.

appears that letter writing emerged in the Mediterranean world on a significant scale through the influence of the Persians on the Greeks, primarily in the practice of official correspondence.<sup>10</sup> It seems as if Philip of Macedon was the first to establish the office of epistolographer in Greece, and then his son, Alexander the Great, and his successors expanded and developed the practice.<sup>11</sup> As the Greek empire spread, relationships between distant parts were maintained by such official correspondence sent through a royal postal service.<sup>12</sup> Then the Romans expanded and greatly improved the official postal service, the cursus publicus, to accommodate the extensive correspondence which grew up between the imperial court and the outlying Roman cities and outposts.<sup>13</sup>

The relative political and social stability which resulted from Greek and Roman rule, greatly facilitated trade and travel and the development of an educational system, all of which created a 'fertile' context for the development of letter writing into new social and cultural contexts. Soon the letter became an important means of conducting business, and of communicating between friends,

---

<sup>10</sup>Stirewalt, Studies, pp. 6-8. Comments about official letter writing in the East are found in Herodotus 8.98.

<sup>11</sup>Stirewalt, Studies, pp. 8-10; White, Light, p. 192. See also the comments on official letter writing in Thucydides 7.11.1; Xenophon, Hellenica 1.1.23; 1.7.4; and Demosthenes, Orations 12.1 and 23.160-62.

<sup>12</sup>White, Light, p. 214, details the development of the Greek royal postal service.

<sup>13</sup>White, Light, p. 214-15; Doty, Letters, p. 1.



a communication practice necessitated by a mobile society in which family, friends and business partners could be separated by great distances. So important was letter writing that it was a regular part of the educational system, a factor which would only increase its practice and development.<sup>14</sup> It is not surprising that soon the practice of writing private and mostly personal letters became the dominant type of letter, even influencing the official letter.<sup>15</sup>

With the dominance of the private letter in a highly socially stratified society, it is not surprising that among the highly educated elite, the private letter evolved into a cultured and aesthetic 'art'. Thus, the 'friendly' letter exchanged among the wealthy upper class, often dictated to private secretaries or written in their own hand, became a sophisticated social practice.<sup>16</sup> As Cicero's comment implies,<sup>17</sup> this type of sophisticated

---

<sup>14</sup>Malherbe, Ancient Epistolary Theorists, SBL Sources for Biblical Study, 19 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 6-7; White, Light, pp. 189-90; J.J. Murphy, ed., A Short History of Writing Instruction (Davis, CA: Hermagoras, 1990), pp. 1-76.

<sup>15</sup>C.B. Welles, Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. xlii-xliii.

<sup>16</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 27-35; White, 'Ancient Greek Letters', in Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament, SBL Sources for Biblical Studies, 21, ed. D.E. Aune (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 86-87; Doty, Letters, pp. 2-3, 6-7. Thraede, Grundzüge, pp. 17-25, 125-29. Compare the comments of Pseudo-Demetrius in his introduction to, Epistolary Types, as quoted in Malherbe, Ancient, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup>See also Cicero's comments about letter writing being a measure of one's friendship, Ad Familiares 2.2.1; Ad Atticum 7.1.

letter is distinguished from the ordinary and purely functional private letter:

That there are many kinds of letters you are well aware; there is one kind, however, about which there can be no mistake, for indeed letter writing was invented just in order that we might inform those at a distance if there were anything which it was important for them or for ourselves that they should know. A letter of this kind you will of course not expect from me (Ad Familiares 2. 4.1).<sup>18</sup>

The next development was a natural outgrowth from these more cultivated letters, the literary letter or the letter-treatises and the letter-essays.<sup>19</sup> This development is reflected in the epistolary theorist's handbook, Demetrius, On Style (234):

Since we occasionally write to States or royal personages, such letters must be composed in a slightly heightened tone. It is right to have regard to the person to whom the letter is addressed. The heightening should not, however, be carried so far that we have a treatise in place of a letter...

This comment was possibly a reaction to the growing practice of writing letter treatises.<sup>20</sup> Such types of letters were often topical essays, advice or instruction, and other forms of discourse designed for a public audience.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the letter treatise became a mode

---

<sup>18</sup>Quotations in this section are taken from the Greek and Latin texts with English translation in Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 16-81.

<sup>19</sup>Stirewalt, Studies, pp. 15-25, 27-42, and 'The Form and Function of the Greek Letter-Essay', in The Romans Debate, ed. K.P. Donfried (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991, 2nd ed.), pp. 147-71; Aune, New Testament, pp. 165-72.

<sup>20</sup>White, Light, p. 192.

<sup>21</sup>Aune, New Testament, pp. 165-70, surveys the range of literary letters.



of instruction among philosophical groups, especially among the Stoics and Cynics.<sup>22</sup>

The development from official to more private letters is evidenced in the Aramaic and the Hebrew letter tradition, though these traditions did not develop the cultured 'friendly' letter and the literary letter, most likely due to the hellenization of literary practice.<sup>23</sup>

By examining the development of epistolary practice from official correspondence to the letter treatise, one begins to see the many different purposes and functions, and the many different cultural contexts the letter served in the Greco-Roman world.

### 3. Greek Epistolary Literature and Conventions<sup>24</sup>

Since the discovery of the papyri in massive finds in the late 1870's, the literary context of the New Testament has come into sharper focus. But the focus has a misleading sharpness. The background clarity which comes

---

<sup>22</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp.36-40; White, Light, p. 192.

<sup>23</sup>Though neither D. Pardee, Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters: A Study Edition, SBL Sources for Biblical Study, 15 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982); or Fitzmyer, 'Aramaic Epistolography', Semeia 22 (1982), pp. 25-57, specifically plot the development of these letter writing traditions, such a development and lack of development is evident by examining the extant letters in chronological order. Regarding the hellenization of literary practice, see M. Hengel, Jew, Greeks and Barbarians, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1980), pp. 67-82.

<sup>24</sup>The literature is vast, the important studies for this study are discussed in the Introduction, section 2.

In this study, Greek letters refer to letters written in the Greek language. Some studies use the terms, 'hellenistic' and 'Greco-Roman' to refer to Greek letters, but when these latter terms are used in this study, they refer to the life and culture of the Mediterranean world under Greek and Roman rule.

from this contextualisation of the New Testament is primarily the result of the accidents of geography and climate.<sup>25</sup> While the papyri evidence provides a Greco-Roman context, it is mostly from the Egyptian quarter of the empire which had its own peculiar political and cultural dynamics.<sup>26</sup> One has to wonder how this vast amount of data from the Egyptian papyri, with still probably twice the data remaining to be edited, published and analysed, has created a false confidence in the comparative background study of the New Testament. One has to wonder how the picture would be different if there were an equal amount of such data from the trash heaps of Corinth or Ephesus. The implicit assumption that the literary papyri represents an empire wide literary context has to be at least marked by a cautious question mark.

This potential skewing is evident in the study of Greek epistolography. The ground-breaking and pace-setting work of Adolf Deissmann with the papyri evidence set the agenda with his emphasis on the New Testament's relation to the common, everyday life inscribed in the vernacular hellenistic Greek writings.<sup>27</sup> He concluded from this that the New Testament letters were best understood as 'real

---

<sup>25</sup>For an extended discussion on the Egyptian geography and climate and their relationship to the papyri, see the relevant sections in N. Lewis, Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), and a briefer discussion in White, Light, pp. 4-18.

<sup>26</sup>The political and cultural context is detailed in White, Light, pp. 9-18.

<sup>27</sup>A. Deissmann, Bible Studies, trans. A. Grieve (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901); and Light from the Ancient East, trans. L.R.M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910).



letters' which reflected private or common matters conveyed in a literary artless and purely occasional manner. Though Deissmann's conclusions have been challenged, the major focus of epistolary comparative studies concentrates on the documentary letter or Deissmann's 'real letters'.<sup>28</sup> Though there may be some justification for this concentration, it nevertheless has left a false impression regarding the study of Pauline letters, that the primary context for understanding the Pauline letter is the Greek documentary letter tradition. S.K. Stowers comments on this problem: 'the relationship of the early Christian letters to the larger world of Greco-Roman letter writing, literature, and rhetoric is today a neglected and a pressing question'.<sup>29</sup>

However, as is obvious from the detailed comparative work which has already been done with respect to the Pauline letters and the Greek epistolary literature, it is clear in terms of the opening and closing that the Pauline letters mirror the Greek documentary letter. Assessing the evidence for the vast literature which falls under this rubric is difficult. Classifying the wide range of epistolary literature is even more difficult. So, in order to survey this body of literature, the survey will need to fall into a necessary, but somewhat arbitrary or convenient, breakdown of the relevant issues. First, the

---

<sup>28</sup>For a discussion on Deissmann's continuing influence over the study of ancient epistolography in relation to the New Testament, see Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 17-21. For a detailed critique of Deissmann, see W.G. Doty, 'The Classification of Epistolary Literature', CBO 31 (1969), pp. 183-99; and Thraede, Grundzüge, pp. 1-4.

<sup>29</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, p. 18.

matter of the physical evidence or kinds of sources will be discussed. Second, the problems of classification of the types of letters will be examined. Third, the relationship of the Greek letter to the context of the Greco-Roman world or life at large will be briefly explored. Fourth, the basic Greek letter form, and in particular, the opening and closing conventions will be studied.

### 3.1. Sources

Greek epistolary literature has been preserved and transmitted through three main sources: literary channels, Egyptian papyri and ostraca.<sup>30</sup> Those letters which come through literary channels were writings primarily from significant Greek or Roman personages like Cicero or Seneca whose literary works were valued because of their artistry, because they provided a portrait of the private and public life of these individuals, or because of the letter's stylistic presentation of classical subjects.<sup>31</sup> These letters are often treatises or essays with epistolary framing with the epistolary framing either being authentic to an epistolary context or fictional. Many of these more literary letters were preserved through letter collections.

The primary source for hellenistic epistolary

---

<sup>30</sup>Doty, Letters, pp. 1-4.

<sup>31</sup>The relationship of literary letters to this study is difficult to assess. In terms of opening and closing conventions, in many cases there is no significant difference from the other Greek epistolary literature, where there are differences, it has little bearing on the opening and closing conventions in the Pauline letter tradition. Therefore, this Greek letter tradition is not surveyed in this study. For further discussion, see Stirewalt, Studies, pp. 15-25, 27-42; idem, 'Greek Letter-Essay', pp. 147-71; Aune, New Testament, pp. 165-72.



literature is the Egyptian papyri. The history of their discovery and classification is an intriguing subject which is briefly discussed in White's recent work, Light from Ancient Letters; a more comprehensive treatment is given in E.G. Turner's, Greek Papyri: An Introduction, and in N. Lewis' book, Life in Egypt under Roman Rule.<sup>32</sup> The primary place where these papyri were uncovered was in the area known as the Fayum in Egypt.<sup>33</sup> Most of the papyri were recovered in the ancient ruins and rubbish heaps of abandoned villages in this area; and others were found in tombs and cemeteries of the Fayum areas primarily as cartonnage coverings.<sup>34</sup>

This archeological find was a monumental breakthrough in the attempt to reconstruct a picture of everyday life in the Greco-Roman times. Until the recovery of the papyri the main literary sources were inscriptions and documents preserved by literary transmission. Much of the papyri were documents which had no literary intent besides the transaction of everyday affairs: contracts, wills, receipts, tax records, business, familial and official letters. Some of the papyri are literary texts, either duplications of literary texts preserved elsewhere or additions to the corpus of literary texts found in other and previous literary collections. The papyri evidence is, hence, classified accordingly, documentary (non-literary)

---

<sup>32</sup>White, Light, pp. 4-8; E.G. Turner, Greek Papyri: An Introduction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 17-41 ; Lewis, Life in Egypt, pp. 1-8.

<sup>33</sup>White, Light, pp. 4-5, 8-9.

<sup>34</sup>White, Light, pp. 4-5.

or literary.<sup>35</sup> Within these documentary records are numerous letters. A discussion of the documentary letter tradition will follow below.

The third source for the hellenistic letter tradition is the ostraca, broken pieces of jars or pots of various kinds of material, clay, glass, etc.<sup>36</sup> Their smooth, porous surface made writing easy with either brush or reed pen. Their limited space or size probably determined the reduction of the message content to an unrefined minimum. The type of message and the economic status of the writer, however, probably determined the writing material: more formal documents and more wealthy individuals used papyri; less formal letters and less wealthy persons used ostraca. Most of the ostraca preserve receipts of various sorts and business records of many kinds--orders, short contracts, etc. The letters on the ostraca, though short, still demonstrate the use of standard epistolary form found on other writing materials. Frequently, however, the ostraca omit opening and closing conventions probably due to the lack of space. The ostraca provide a valuable comparison with the papyri showing how letter conventions were adaptable but still very regular in two distinct kinds of letter evidence.

In this study, the papyri letters are the chief source for comparative analysis.

---

<sup>35</sup>White, Light, pp. 5.

<sup>36</sup>White, Light, pp. 5, 213.



### 3.2. The Classification of Greek Epistolary Literature

The letter tradition represented in the hellenistic epistolary literature is diverse and broad.<sup>37</sup> It includes diplomatic/royal correspondence, administrative or official correspondence, legal and contract letters, and literary letters which include letter-essays, philosophical letters, novelistic letters, imaginative letters, fictitious and pseudonymous letters. The literature also includes the common or documentary letters which comprise both business and friendly letters of assorted types. These various classifications of the kinds of epistolary literature is not standardized by any means.<sup>38</sup> The above categorization is essentially by content with style and form providing an additional factor in distinguishing between various kinds of letters.

There have been various attempts at classifying the various kinds of Greek letters, primarily by form and function.<sup>39</sup> Both these classifications have their strengths and weaknesses. In the discussion below each classification will be surveyed. By examining both the kinds of letters and their classification or categories it

---

<sup>37</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1732-33.

<sup>38</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1732-33, has four classifications, diplomatic/royal, administrative/official, literary, and common; Doty, 'Classification', pp. 195-98, has two, more private, and less private; Aune, New Testament, pp. 161-66, has three, private/documentary, official, and literary.

<sup>39</sup>H.G. Meecham, Light from Ancient Letters (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923), pp. 42-45, suggests a classification based on content: personal and domestic, semi-official, invitations, recommendation, business, miscellaneous.

is possible to understand the wide spectrum of Greek letters, their differences and their similarities. Equally the classification of the letters provides a rubric by which to compare other letters from other traditions which can be classified as the same type. Before discussing the various theories of classification, however, one needs to discuss the study of Greek papyrus by Deissmann, as his initial classification of the Greek papyri literature has been the basis for most studies of Greek letters.

### 3.2.1 Deissmann's Classification of Greek Papyrus Literature

Adolf Deissmann pioneered much of the comparative study of early Christian writings to the Egyptian papyri, and in turn suggested a number of significant conclusions regarding the relationship of early Christianity to hellenistic and Jewish culture. One particular aspect of his work developed the distinction between 'letter' and 'epistle' among the Greek papyrus letters.<sup>40</sup> Letters (Briefe), according to Deissmann, are confidential and personal, artless and inartificial, unpremeditated and occasional, ephemeral and unliterary-- typified in the common business and familial papyri letters.<sup>41</sup> Epistles (Episteln) are a form of literary art, public in nature and written for posterity--typified by the literary letters.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup>Deissmann, Light, pp. 290-302.

<sup>41</sup>Doty, 'Classification', pp. 189-90, provides a convenient summary of Deissmann's various statements regarding the differences between the letter and the epistle from all his writings.

<sup>42</sup>Doty, 'Classification', p. 190; Stowers, Letter Writing, p. 18.



This dichotomy between letter and epistle was placed against the backdrop of a larger opposition between literary and non-literary traditions and expressions in the ancient world, with letters being non-literary and epistles being literary.<sup>43</sup> The non-literary tradition is marked by natural, spontaneous, immediate, and genuine expressions of personal or individual religion which makes it a better source for examining the vitality of early Christian religious writings.<sup>44</sup> As Deissmann says, 'The letter (in its essence) carries us into the sacred solitude of simple, unaffected humanity;...its history...directs us to the childhood years of the pre-literary man'.<sup>45</sup> The literary tradition, on the other hand, being contrived art was cold and impersonal, theological or dogmatic, mechanical and conventional.<sup>46</sup> The juxtaposition of letters as non-literary and epistles as literary led to the conclusion that letters were 'real' letters; epistles, 'non-real' letters.<sup>47</sup>

Deissmann's distinction between letter (non-literary) and epistle (literary) has not been maintained in recent epistolary classification. Critics have noted that the

---

<sup>43</sup>Deissmann, Light, pp. 218-21.

<sup>44</sup>Deissmann, Light, p. 233-34.

<sup>45</sup>Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup>Deissmann, Light, p. 147; see also Doty, 'Classification', pp. 185-89, for his assessment of this perspective in its historical context.

<sup>47</sup>Deissmann, Light, pp. 220.

distinction is too strained and artificial.<sup>48</sup> In addition, such a dichotomy, based on a romantic and elitist notion of humanity, does not properly respect the conventional and literary or textual dimension of all written communication: 'All letters are literature in the very broadest sense'.<sup>49</sup> Further, the public/private opposition fails to regard the social context of letter writing in antiquity where even so-called private letters were often directed to community settings such as households and where private letters were consciously styled for possible preservation in the public domain.<sup>50</sup> Deissmann based so much of his literary (public) versus non-literary (private) distinction on whether a writing was intended for publication or for personal, confidential, individual reading; an intention which is hard to substantiate either on the basis of the letter format or on the basis of content. S.K. Stowers aptly comments:

Therefore, we must be careful about distinctions between literary and non-literary letters, real and nonreal letters...They have some validity but should not be used to define the letter so narrowly that we miss the larger phenomenon of what people actually did with letters in antiquity.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.2.2. Classification Based on Epistolary Form

Though the classification of hellenistic epistolary literature as either letters or epistles has not been

---

<sup>48</sup>Doty, 'Classification', p. 189; also Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 18-20.

<sup>49</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, p. 19. The textuality of all texts is explored in Jeanrond, Theological, pp. 78-92.

<sup>50</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, p. 20.



maintained, Deissmann's division between literary and non-literary letters, real and non-real letters has remained determinative in epistolary classification and analysis. The primary classification presently operative is the division between literary and documentary (non-literary) letters.<sup>52</sup> The documentary letters are often subdivided into two sub-categories, private and official.<sup>53</sup> Recent studies, however, have elevated official (and/or royal) correspondence to a distinct category on its own making three letter categories: private, official, and literary.<sup>54</sup> These distinctions are based primarily on stylistic or formal epistolary features such as the formulaic differences in the address (which will be examined below when the Greek letter form is surveyed).

The advantage of this three-fold classification is its distinction of various letter traditions by form which makes comparative analysis between New Testament letters and these three hellenistic letter types easier. The influence of form criticism is in part behind this emphasis on comparing stylistic or formal differences.<sup>55</sup> The main

---

<sup>52</sup>White, Light, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup>White, Light, p. 5, also distinguishes between two kinds of official letters, administrative/official and royal/diplomatic. Exler, Form, p. 23, lists four kinds of letters based on content, family, business, petitions and applications, official.

<sup>54</sup>Aune, New Testament, pp. 162-66.

<sup>55</sup>Funk, 'The Letter: Form and Style', in Language, pp. 250-74; H. Boers, 'The Form Critical Study of Paul's Letters: 1 Thessalonians as a Case Study' NTS 22 (1976), pp. 140-58; B. Rigaux, The Letters of St. Paul: Modern Studies, trans. S. Yonick (Chicago: Franciscan Herald

problem with a classification based on form is the lack of regard for differences in content and function. This is evident in David Aune's classification of hellenistic letters according to these three categories, as in each secondary classification of the primary categories, a different criteria is used: private letters by function; official letters by content; and literary letters by various micro-genres.<sup>56</sup> White's defence of this threefold classification based on form is based on the need to analyze and understand Christian letters as 'real' letters, an issue formulated by Paul Schubert nearly 50 years ago and given renewed impetus by Robert Funk, and then the SBL Seminar on the Form and Function of the Pauline Letters formed in 1970 in response to Funk's work.<sup>57</sup> The scholarly focus on the documentary private letters highlights the formal features or epistolary conventions of the letter so that they become the basis of the comparative analysis rather than the aspects of content or function. From this perspective, New Testament epistles can be evaluated and interpreted with regard to their status as a 'real' private letters. Implicit in this agenda is Deissmann's

---

Press, 1968), pp. 115-46.

<sup>56</sup>Aune, New Testament, pp. 162-69.

<sup>57</sup>P. Schubert, 'Form and Function of the Pauline Letters', The Journal of Religion 19 (1939), pp. 365-77. R.W. Funk, 'Apostolic Parousia: Form and Significance', in Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, ed. W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule, and R.R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 249-68; 'The Form and Structure of II and III John', JBL 94 (1975), pp. 403-18. The role of the SBL Seminar Group is detailed in J.L. White, 'The Ancient Epistolography Group in Retrospect', Semeia 22 (1981), pp. 1-14.



distinction between 'real and non-real' letters, for New Testament epistles which use the conventions of documentary private letters are studied as 'real' letters, while those with different epistolary conventions like 1 John or Hebrews are classified as 'non-real' letters, more like treatises in letter-guise.<sup>58</sup> Comparing and studying the New Testament letters according to their form actually confirms Deissmann's attempt to free the Pauline letters from interpretation and evaluation as theological 'epistles' or treatises. However, the assessment of epistolary literature according to form is not enough. Every letter represents a unique epistolary context not necessarily determined by its form; the function of a letter must also be assessed.

### 3.2.3. Classification According to Function

Classification according to function attempts to assess the form and content of letters in order to determine how they functioned in the epistolary context or situation to which the letters were originally addressed. Several of the key ancient epistolary theorists classified letters according to types. The Epistolary Types of Pseudo-Demetrius suggests twenty-one types, while Pseudo-Libanius in Epistolary Styles discusses forty-one types.<sup>59</sup> For both of them, type referred to letter style in which the aspects of form, content, phrasing, etc., were

---

<sup>58</sup>See the treatment of New Testament epistles in White, 'Saint Paul', pp. 433-44; idem, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1751-56.

<sup>59</sup>Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 4-6, with Greek text and English translation, pp. 31-41, 67-81.

selected to fit the particular circumstance to which the letter was addressed. Pseudo-Demetrius states, 'According to the theory that governs epistolary types, Heraclides, they can be composed from a great number of specific types (of style), but take their shape from among those which always fit the particular circumstance (to which they are addressed)'. The particular circumstance includes the sender's relationship to the recipient, the kind of information or request being conveyed, and the social level at which the exchange is being made whether privately, publically, or officially.

The above concept of letter types is very functional. What is important to note, in terms of classification, is how ancient letter types corresponded to different functions a letter could perform in relation to certain social contexts or occasions.<sup>60</sup> Though many of the names of the types are similar to the classifying of letters according to content, the classification differs because it is not so much what is said, as how it is said in the appropriate context.

Building on the concept of rhetoric and the writings of ancient epistolary theorists, Stowers, in his monograph, Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity, proposes six epistolary types: (1) letters of friendship; (2) family letters; (3) letters of praise and blame; (4) letters of exhortation and advice; (5) letters of

---

<sup>60</sup>Many scholars relate the typology of letters found in ancient epistolary theorists with the theory and practice of ancient rhetoric, Aune, New Testament, p. 161, 197-202; Doty, Letters, pp. 8-11; Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 34, 51-57, but this will be refuted below, section 3.4.



mediation; and (6) accusing, apologetic, and accounting letters.<sup>61</sup> Like the ancient epistolary theorists, his categories are based on function. For him, a letter type is determined by the action the letter performed in the context of Greco-Roman society. It is the juxtaposition between function with respect to context that is important to Stowers. The letters, though, are classified by him without regard to the differences in form and content a letter may evidence based on social context. Social context often prescribed convention. For example in letters of petition the recipient is almost always named first in the address because he or she is politically or socially superior to the sender.<sup>62</sup> Yet, in Stowers' classification, social context emerges in the type: letters of friendship are between equals; letters of praise are written to equals or superiors; letters of blame are written to individuals in all social classes.<sup>63</sup> Stowers analyzes each letter type according to the writer/recipient relationship and according to the goal or action the letter aims to achieve in that relationship.

The strength of this functional classification is its attempt to respect all aspects of the aptum in the classification of letters. In this sense the textuality of letters is implicitly acknowledged. His classification does present some problem for a comparative study when the epistolary function appears mixed, as seems the case with

---

<sup>61</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 15-16, 51-57.

<sup>62</sup>White, Light, pp. 195.

<sup>63</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 21-27.

the New Testament or the early Christian epistolary tradition.<sup>64</sup> Aune also criticises Stowers' functional approach to letters because certain kinds of official letters and literary letters are not included in his typology.<sup>65</sup> This limitation possibly stems from Stowers' understanding or definition of letters based on the ancient epistolary theorists and some modern studies of ancient letters which regard the overtly artful or public letter as outside the letter writing act. In this sense, Stowers may be subtly guilty of Deissmann's 'real and non-real' distinction, a distinction he criticizes.<sup>66</sup>

In summary, the classification of hellenistic epistolary literature is an arbitrary analytical decision. Classification depends on several analytical perceptions. Classification based on form is primarily motivated by the desire to isolate the literary conventions which separate the letter texts from other literary genres of the time. It also seeks a comparative control for tracing the epistolary tradition from the earliest evidence up through the late church fathers based on the perspective of genre. Form-critical theory also plays a part, for the developmental trajectory provides a plot to isolate pre-textual traditions from later traditional and redactional development.

---

<sup>64</sup>White, Light, pp. 18-20, and 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1739; Aune, New Testament, pp. 203-14.

<sup>65</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 162.

<sup>66</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 17-20.



Classification based on function takes into account the rhetorical aptum which is an important textual aspect of ancient letters. It has the advantage of seeing letters as a textual communication event. However, the function of Greek letters is generally based on social context which makes a functional approach to Greco-Roman letters difficult when seeking the comparative function of New Testament epistles, as discussed below.

Both methods of classification have their problems. Whatever classification one adopts, the reason for classifying letters is to provide a comparative basis for analyzing other epistolary literature with the Greek letter tradition. By surveying the various kinds of classification of Greek letters, it is clear that form and function are important aspects of a letter's textual and rhetorical nature.

In this study a basic threefold classification will be used for comparative analysis: (1) private, (2) official, and (3) literary. The classification is primarily by function. Private letters transact personal or business matters between individuals; official letters are formal communication between persons in their official capacity; and literary letters are artistic and aesthetic letters exchanged for personal pleasure or for the public domain.

### 3.3. The Social Context for Greek Letters

Appreciating letters as a literary and rhetorical phenomenon requires that the social context the letter operates within be given due regard. As noted in the last section, in the ancient world, social context effected

letter convention. A key example is letters of petition<sup>67</sup> or accusing letters<sup>68</sup> in which the recipient is named first in the salutation, a format distinct from the salutation convention found in most other Greek letters.<sup>69</sup> This change in form seems to stem from the nature of the relationship between the sender and addressee; in these types of letters the addressee is almost always a superior socially or politically. But one cannot generalize and state that whenever the recipient is a superior, he or she is named first in the salutation.<sup>70</sup> In petition letters, a grievance is stated and some kind of redress is requested. According to White, the salutation in petition letters serves a rhetorical means to achieve the end, 'The formula does seem to reflect the writer's sense of reverence and/or dependence on the recipient'.<sup>71</sup> From a literary perspective, one could say the salutation helps to establish the tone or atmosphere of the text, a tone of deference and an atmosphere of respect. Letters of petition illustrate the fact that Greek letters are affected in form and style by social context.

---

<sup>67</sup>For a detailed study see J.L. White, The Form and Structure of the Official Petition, SBLDS, 5 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972); also Mullins, 'Petition', pp. 46-54; Exler, Form, pp. 42-49, 65-67; White, Light, pp. 194-96.

<sup>68</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 166-73.

<sup>69</sup>White, Light, p. 195; Exler, Form, pp. 42-49.

<sup>70</sup>As does Exler, Form, p. 65; but White, 'Epistolary Formulas and Cliches in Greek Papyrus Letters', SBLSP 2 (1978), pp. 292-93, esp. 313n10, corrects this generalisation.

<sup>71</sup>White, 'Epistolary Formulas', p. 292.



Some of the early studies of the hellenistic papyri letters, like those by Exler and Deissmann, made a basic social distinction by the classification of letters as private or public.<sup>72</sup> For Exler, private means 'a frank intercourse [conversation] between distant persons [primarily individuals]'; public means 'an essay in the form of a real letter, not necessarily addressed to any definite individual or group of individuals, and destined, at least indirectly, and ultimately for the world at large'.<sup>73</sup>

The private/public distinction does not actually provide much information in terms of social context analysis. It actually only defines the audience size and correlates discourse style with the audience size. In addition, as noted above, this social dichotomy may be a modern imposition on the social structure of the Greco-Roman world in which the social spheres of the household and the client-patron system were not easily divided accordingly. Further, as a dichotomy, it negates the correlation of context with function which when the options are multiple establish a continuum of possible social settings rather than the sharp disjunction the private-public contrast creates.

Letter writing in Greco-Roman antiquity must be understood in terms of two social contexts. First, there is the network of social relationships which were central

---

<sup>72</sup>On Deissmann, see section 2.2.1. above; Exler, Form, pp. 15-18.

<sup>73</sup>Exler, Form, pp. 16-17.

to the culture at that time and which often prescribed how the letter functioned. Second, the context of the cultural mechanics or practicalities of letter writing must be taken into account. This second context includes factors such as delivery services, scribes, orality; all of which possibly affected the letter's rhetorical and textual effect.

### 3.3.1. Social Networks and the Greek Letter

The social world of the Mediterranean area during the Greco-Roman period is a complex subject with new evidence constantly being uncovered and assessed and with new methods of analyzing and ways of synthesizing that evidence constantly establishing a different understanding of the time.<sup>74</sup> In the scope of this study, the remarks will be general and from the perspective of how the social context related to letter writing.

Stowers posits three sets of social networks which were central to letter writing in the culture of the Greco-Roman period.<sup>75</sup> One is ~~the~~ the client-patron relationship, a hierarchical relationship of superordinate to subordinate. Second is the institution of friendship, a relationship primarily between equals.

---

<sup>74</sup>J. Stambaugh and D. Balch, The Social World of the First Christians (London: SPCK, 1986), provides a basic introduction with bibliography for specialized studies; see also H. Koester, Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. 1: History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age, Hermeneia, Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); L.M. White, ed., Social Networks in the Early Christian Environment: Issues and Methods for Social History, Semeia, 56 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

<sup>75</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 27-31.



Third is the household, a mixed set of relationships both hierarchical and equal.

The patronage system was a well demarcated social structure, a structure defined according to the precept of honour.<sup>76</sup> Honour was often dispersed and revoked through letters, as in letters of recommendation or praise and letters of blame.<sup>77</sup> Honour was generally tied to one's class and based on categories like political power, property or wealth. At the top of the socio-economic spectrum was the emperor and his household. The social order descended from there with various levels of aristocracy, i.e. the senatorial order, the equestrians, the local aristocrats, etc. At the bottom were the slaves and migrating agricultural workers. Social mobility depended on gaining access to power and privilege through a relationship with someone socially superior: 'In nearly every case the step upward owed something to the talent and aggressiveness of the beneficiary, but also in nearly every case it owed a great deal to connections, to the favorable sponsorship of someone in authority'.<sup>78</sup> In this client-patron relationship, clients depended on social

---

<sup>76</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 27-28. Patronage in the hellenistic world is detailed in J.K. Chow, Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth (JSNTSup, 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), pp. 38-82; and P. Marshall, Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians, WUNT, 23 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), pp. 91-129.

<sup>77</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 77-90. For specialized studies on the letter of recommendation, White, Light, pp. 193-94; C-H Kim, Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation, SBLDS, 4 (Missoula: SBL, 1972).

<sup>78</sup>Stambaugh and Balch, Social World, p. 114.

superiors and equals to grant favors and to intercede on their behalf; and patrons expected in return to receive public social recognition in the form of praise, deferential behavior, and public awards. Letters were one device by which the system worked with benefactors writing letters of praise, and patrons writing letters of blame.<sup>79</sup>

The concept of friendship in Greece and in the Roman empire was more institutional than the modern concept.<sup>80</sup> Friendship was organized through various forms of association and perpetuated through defined conventions and social sanctions. Associations of friends occurred primarily in the realms of education with the gymnasium and in the realm of business and religion with the collegia.<sup>81</sup> These associations often carried political clout. The Latin word for friendship, amicitia, which often designated an alliance of families, was sometimes equated with the word for a political party, factio.<sup>82</sup> It was the institution of friendship which significantly influenced the letter writing tradition in Greco-Roman antiquity; and many of the epistolary formulas and cliches of endearment stem from the institution of friendship.<sup>83</sup>

Another aspect of the friendship context of letters is the fact that such types of letters would have been limited

---

<sup>79</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 77-90.

<sup>80</sup>Marshall, Enmity, pp. 1-34.

<sup>81</sup>Stambaugh and Balch, Social World, pp. 41-43, 124-27, 132-37; A. Malherbe, Social Aspects of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), pp. 87-91.

<sup>82</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 29-30.

<sup>83</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 22, 58-70.



to a small group of aristocratic, well educated friends. While letter writing was a part of all social classes and social interactions, the friendly letter (as opposed to the simple private family letters) had a distinct relationship to linguistic and literary fluency.<sup>84</sup> Letter writing, if taught, was reserved for the secondary stage of education and most often for the subsequent phase when an individual studied with a teacher of rhetoric.<sup>85</sup> Such an educational experience was generally reserved for the elite. If letters of friendship, at least the more sophisticated ones, were the primary domain of an elite cadre, no doubt, the conventions, cliches and the style of letters were effected or at least reflected the lifestyle of this group.

Households were a third key area of social relationships.<sup>86</sup> Whether Greek, Roman or Jewish, ancient households were large social networks of complex hierarchical and familial relationships. Hierarchically, the highest ranking male ruled the home, with the wife and children next in authority. Extended families were also

---

<sup>84</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 32-35.

<sup>85</sup>This is typified in the correlation between an epistolary handbook and the letters of Cicero. One of the earliest rhetorical works which treats letter writing dates from the first century BCE, On Style, attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum. It was about this same time that Cicero wrote some of the standard examples of friendly letters. The handbook, Cicero's letters, and other letters of friendship (i.e. Pliny) demonstrate such letter writing was limited to the educated, to those with leisure, and to those who valued such literary expression as an aesthetic entertainment.

<sup>86</sup>D.L. Balch, Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter, SBLDS, 26 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), passim, provides insights into the household in the Greco-Roman world.

usually a part of the household. As the household was usually the economic centre for the family, the social network extended to the hired servants and slaves. It was common for such a complex nexus of social interactions to include live-in guests and associated freedmen. It is not surprising that so many of the papyri letters concern themselves with the affairs of the household.<sup>87</sup>

In the ancient Greco-Roman world, letters served the social networks operative in the patronage system, friendship associations, and the household. Much of the letter tradition stems from the direct impact of these social contexts on letter conventions, style and content.

### 3.3.2. The Cultural Practicalities of Letter Writing

A second significant social context for ancient letters is the cultural practicalities of letter writing in the Greco-Roman world. This is important because the rhetoric or textual nature of the letter is possibly affected by this. Some scholars have suggested with regard to Pauline epistles that they have been misunderstood because the mechanical aspects of letter writing have not been properly accounted for in the interpretation of the letters.<sup>88</sup> The relevant aspects of this context which impinge upon the interpretation of the letter are: (1) the use of a professional scribe or amanuensis/secretary; (2) the role of the messenger-carrier or envoy; (3) the orality

---

<sup>87</sup>On family letters, see Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 71-76; White, Light, pp. 196-97; Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 104-14.

<sup>88</sup>See particularly G.J. Bahr, 'Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century', CBO 28 (1966), pp. 465-77.



of the letter which may mean that the letter was composed from an oral perspective or for oral delivery.<sup>89</sup>

The role of the professional scribe or secretary (amanuensis) in ancient letter writing is more significant to the letter tradition than the other factors discussed so far.<sup>90</sup> The majority of the population hired professional scribes who conducted their business on the streets.<sup>91</sup> Many of the scribes were literate but not necessarily educated. Many of the documents (contracts, simple family letters) from these common scribes often only employed stock phrases and clichés and used standard letter conventions and format.<sup>92</sup> Only official letters and legal documents contained an illiteracy formula preceding the farewell which named the scribe; private letters usually made no mention of the scribe.<sup>93</sup>

On the other hand, government officials and the wealthy often had professional secretaries or amanuenses. This allowed for letters to be dictated by the sender himself as opposed to the professional scribe who composed a letter from his stock of standard letter formulas and

---

<sup>89</sup>Details regarding the mechanics of letter writing, the writing material, ink, pen, etc., are in White, Light, pp. 213-17; Winter, Life and Letters, pp. 82-88.

<sup>90</sup>E.R. Richards, The Secretary in the Letters of Paul, WUNT 2,42 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), pp. 15-66; White, Light, pp. 215-16; R.N. Longenecker, 'Ancient Amanuenses and the Pauline Epistles', in New Dimensions in New Testament Study, ed. R.N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 281-96.

<sup>91</sup>White, Light, p. 216; Lewis, Life in Egypt, p. 82.

<sup>92</sup>For an example of such a letter, White, Light, letter 103b.

<sup>93</sup>Exler, Form, pp. 124-27; White, Light, p. 216.

cliches. In addition, the educated were able to make more creative use of letter convention by manipulating the literary or artful aspects of letter communication. Evidence is inconclusive as to how much freedom a secretary or amanuensis had in composing a letter. So a letter was effected by whether one employed a street scribe or a personal secretary.

The role of the messenger-carrier is difficult to discern.<sup>94</sup> In some letters of invitation, the traditional salutation and greeting are omitted from which one assumes that the letter carrier delivered this orally.<sup>95</sup> It is speculation to say that the important aspect of the message was the oral message or that the messenger offered insightful or informed clarification of the letter contents; there is little or no evidence to support these conjectures.<sup>96</sup> How often the messenger carried additional

---

<sup>94</sup>The role of messengers varied depending on whether the messenger was simply a courier or also the scribe and sender's representative, White, Light, pp. 215-216; Richards, Secretary, pp. 2-9.

<sup>95</sup>White, Light, p. 216. See the specialized study, C-H Kim, 'The Papyrus Invitation', JBL 94 (1975), pp. 391-402. A quote from a letter from the third century BCE, Simale instructs the recipient, Zenon, to obtain additional information from the letter carrier: τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ πυνθάνου τοῦ φέροντός σοι τὰ γράμματα, 'The rest learn from the one who carries the letter to you,' (White, Light, letter 10.14).

<sup>96</sup>This problem is assessing the relationship of the letter carrier to the letter and the nature of the postal service. In letters where the carrier is mentioned, (White, Light, letters, 7, 10, 19, 47, 104a, 106, 112) it is difficult to assess their function beyond acting as the courier. For an examination of the concept of envoy whose secondary function may have been to carry the letter, an issue which may be more pertinent to the letters of Paul, see M.M. Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus', JBL 111 (1992), pp. 641-62.



information is difficult to know, it probably was situational. A messenger trustworthy enough to carry such a message was probably limited to a personal courier which was only available to the wealthy or government officials. Most letter carriers, even for the upper classes, were strangers, either traveling merchants or people on a journey, who happened to be going to the letter's destination.<sup>97</sup> The postal system was reserved for government, military and other state business; though officials probably utilized the system for private correspondence.<sup>98</sup>

It is generally accepted that most ancient letters were read aloud.<sup>99</sup> However, it is difficult to assess the possible impact of the orality of texts.<sup>100</sup> The tension is more acute in trying to determine if the oral conventions of rhetoric or dictation effected the letter format or style.<sup>101</sup> Yet, no matter how oral in nature the letter may have been in its origin, the transcription into a text changed the nature of the communication event. Even if the recipient heard the letter orally, the communication context was not ~~oral~~ <sup>oral</sup> communication between the letter parties. There was no facial expression, inflection, or

---

<sup>97</sup>White, Light, letter 104b: 'And when I found someone who was journeying to you from Cyrene, I thought it a necessity to inform you about my welfare'.

<sup>98</sup>White, Light, pp. 214-17.

<sup>99</sup>Achtemeier, 'Omne verbum sonat', pp. 15-16.

<sup>100</sup>Achtemeier, 'Omne verbum sonat', pp. 3-27; Ong, Orality and Literacy, pp. 5-77; see Chapter One, section 5.

<sup>101</sup>The practice of dictation in the ancient world is discussed in Richards, Secretary, pp. 24-42.

other immediate contextual verbal factors exchanged between the writer and addressee to provide clues to meaning.<sup>102</sup> Since the reader was not the writer, the ~~textual~~<sup>oral</sup> medium only became an additional context in the reading act to effect understanding. Even if the letter was composed under the influence of oral rhetorical style, the setting of the reading was not an oral setting of an orator confronting a live audience.<sup>103</sup> For the writer, the addressee remained a projection, separated by time and distance at the time of writing. Similarly in the oral reading of the letter to or by the addressee, the writer/sender remained a projection based on memory and the writer's textual presence in the text.

The possible impact of the cultural practicalities of letter writing in antiquity on the rhetoric and textual nature of letters appears to have been limited. The greatest factors seem to have been the education and personal wealth of the letter sender. The educated wealthy, the two usually went together, were able to utilize the letter tradition creatively or conventionally depending on their desire or the function of the letter. The impact of messengers, if any, would have been limited to the wealthy who could have afforded to hire or send personal couriers. The oral nature of ancient letters is

---

<sup>102</sup>Aspects of oral discourse are examined in M. Coulthard, An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, Applied Linguistics and Language Study (London: Longman, 1985, 2nd ed.), pp. 13-145; see also Brown and Yule, Discourse Analysis, pp. 6-19.

<sup>103</sup>On the relationship between the theory of letter writing and the practice of letter writing in terms of dialogue or conversation, see section 5 below.



debatable, but the fact that the document, whether a letter-essay or business letter, was put in letter form reveals that the sender knew the document was a literary communication. Even if oral rhetorical devices are embedded in the letter, the sender knew the aptum of a letter was significantly different from a verbal setting; this would include a setting where the letter was read aloud.

#### 3.4. Greek Epistolary Literature and the Rhetorical Tradition

In recent years, the application of ancient rhetorical theory to the interpretation of New Testament epistles has increased significantly.<sup>104</sup> This raises the issue of the relationship between ancient rhetorical theory and practice and the Greek epistolary literature.<sup>105</sup> The primary sources for determining this relationship are (1) a work on epistolary theory, On Style (De Elocutione), attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum, probably dating from the first century BCE;<sup>106</sup> (2) the epistolary handbook, Epistolary

---

<sup>104</sup>See the Introduction, section 2.2.

<sup>105</sup>Scholarly opinion on the influence of rhetoric on ancient epistolary theory varies, Doty, Letters, pp. 8-11 and White, Light, pp. 190-91, see little influence; Aune, New Testament, pp. 158, 160-61, 198-99, suggests influence particularly in letters of the educated class; Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 24, 34, 51-57, is hesitant to ascribe much influence, but does see some; even more hesitant is Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 4-15; Porter, 'Theoretical Justification', pp. 109-17, and Reed, 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories', both argue against the influence of rhetoric on epistolary practice.

<sup>106</sup>For Greek text and English translation, Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 16-19. Discussion on the text, Malherbe, Ancient, p. 2; Koskeniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 21-29; Thrade, Grundzüge, pp. 17-24. Dating of the document ranges from third century BCE to the first century CE;

Types (Τύποι 'Επιστολικοί), also falsely ascribed to Demetrius of Phalerum, often designated as Pseudo-Demetrius, dated somewhere in the period, 200 BCE to 300 CE;<sup>107</sup> (3) the epistolary handbook, Epistolary Styles ('Επιστολιμαῖοι Χαρακτῆρες), falsely attributed to Libanius, dated from the period, 400-600 CE;<sup>108</sup> (4) in addition there are the remarks about letter writing and rhetoric in the letters of Cicero, Seneca, and other similar practitioners of rhetoric.<sup>109</sup> From these different sources it is possible to assess the relationship between the theory and practice of rhetoric and letter writing.<sup>110</sup>

While letter writing eventually became a topic for the theory and practice of rhetoric, it is not until the middle

---

Malherbe's (Ancient, p. 5), argument for first century BCE seems convincing.

<sup>107</sup>Greek text and English translation, Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 30-41. Discussions on the text, Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 3-4; Thrade, Grundzüge, pp. 25-27; Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 54-56. For the problem of dating, see Malherbe, Ancient, p. 4.

<sup>108</sup>Greek text and English translation, Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 66-81. Another manuscript tradition attributes the text to Proclus, with both possibly stemming from a common source. Discussion of the text, Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 5-6; Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 56-57.

<sup>109</sup>On Cicero, see Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 2-3, and 20-27 for selected Latin texts and English translation; Thrade, Grundzüge, pp. 27-47. On Seneca, Malherbe, Ancient, p. 3, and pp. 28-29 for selected Latin texts and English translation; Thrade, Grundzüge, pp. 65-74. Other epistolary theorists, Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 2-6; Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 29-33.

<sup>110</sup>Extended discussions on this issue can be found in Porter, 'Theoretical Justification', pp. 108-17; Reed, 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories', pp. 294-314



ages that this occurs.<sup>111</sup> In the period of the third century BCE to the third century CE in which the Greek letter tradition thrived, there is almost no mention of letter writing in any extant handbook of rhetoric; and in the epistolary handbooks and theorists, rhetoric and letter writing are always differentiated in theory and practice.

Demetrius's On Style (first century BCE) is the first significant discussion found on letter writing in any Greco-Roman rhetorician. The comments are made as an excursus (223-235) in the general discussion on 'plain style' (*ἰσχυρός*) and appear to be a response to a theory of letter writing stemming from Artemon,<sup>112</sup> the editor of Aristotle's letters, that letters should be written in the manner of a dialogue (223). Demetrius corrects Artemon, 'The letter should be a little more studied than the dialogue, since the latter reproduces an extemporary utterance, while the former is committed to writing and is (in a way) sent as a gift' (224). Demetrius' point is that

---

<sup>111</sup>Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric, pp. 161-194; and survey in Hughes, Early, pp. 27-29, whose remark, 'The fact that letter writing is so firmly established in the mediaeval appropriation of Graeco-Roman rhetoric suggests that the composition of letters may have been more than a peripheral concern in the actual practice of rhetors, particularly in the Hellenistic period', neglects the development of written rhetoric in the post-hellenistic period which distinguished the theory and practice of rhetoric in the middle ages.

<sup>112</sup>Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 24-27, suggests that the reference to Artemon, and other references in the excursus on Aristotle's letters is evidence that Artemon wrote a theoretical essay on epistolary theory in a rhetorical discussion. But Demetrius' reference to Artemon is not necessarily an actual reference to an actual source; equally, Koskenniemi over reads the other references to Aristotle to suggest that all such references stem from the Artemon source, so Thrade, Grundzüge, pp. 20-22, and Malherbe, Ancient, p. 2.

letter writing is distinctly different from spoken discourse. Further, Demetrius clearly distinguishes letters from oration. As opposed to oration, letters should not: (a) imitate conversational style (226); (b) be too long or stilted in expression (228); (c) employ certain types of ornamental devices or arguments (229, 231, 232); (d) address certain topics (230). Hence, with regard to style, Demetrius clearly distinguishes letter writing from anything oratorical.

The premier Roman letter writer, Cicero (first century BCE), made several comments regarding letter writing.<sup>113</sup> But he nowhere writes as if he had a systematic theory of epistolography, most of the comments on letters being dispersed incidently in his corpus of writings.<sup>114</sup> Significantly, there are no comments about letter writing in any of his writings on rhetoric (De Inventione, De Oratore, Partitiones Oratoriae, Brutus, and Orator). While many of Cicero's letters show affinity with rhetorical features and composition, this is due to the fact that friendly letter writing was for him an artistic and aesthetic exercise.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup>For example, as noted in Malherbe Ancient, p. 2, Cicero makes a distinction between public and private letters (Pro Flacco 16.37); mentions the genre of epistles (Ad Familiares 4.13.1), suggests jesting be avoided in certain types of letters (Ad Atticum 6.5.4), and as conveying the presence of an absent friend (Ad Familiares 3.11.2).

<sup>114</sup>Malherbe, Ancient, p. 2, thinks Cicero knew such theory and handbooks; see however Porter, 'Theoretical Justification', pp. 112-113, for a contrary and more probable position.

<sup>115</sup>Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 32-35.



That there are many kinds of letters you are well aware; there is one kind, however, about which there can be no mistake, for indeed letter writing was invented just in order that we might inform those at a distance if there were anything which it was important for them or for ourselves that they should know. A letter of this kind you will of course not expect from me...There remain two kinds of letters which have a great charm for me, the one intimate and humorous, the other austere and serious. (Ad Familiares 2.4.1)

Two other important practitioners of rhetoric make comments about letter writing, again generally making a distinction between letters and oratory. Seneca (first century CE) associates letters with conversation, and conversation is distinct from oration (Epistulae Morales 75.1-2). Quintilian (first century CE) remarks that letters and conversation should be of a 'looser texture' than the closely 'welded and woven' style of oration (Institutio Oratoria 9.4.19-22).

In fact the first rhetorician to include letter writing as a part of a theory of rhetoric is Julius Victor, in his work, Ars Rhetorica 27 (fourth century CE). Yet, even in this case, it is an appendix (De Epistolis), and only discusses the matter of style. As A. Malherbe notes, 'While epistolary style is here, then, part of a rhetorical system, it can nevertheless be argued that the fact that it is relegated to an appendix shows that it does not properly belong in a discussion of rhetoric'.<sup>116</sup>

The two epistolary handbooks, Epistolary Types and Epistolary Styles, though providing extensive discussions on the matter of epistolary practice, are distinctly not developing a system of rhetorical theory with respect to

---

<sup>116</sup>Malherbe, Ancient, p. 3.

letter writing. Both handbooks posit the appropriate letter style for particular epistolary situations, and provide sample letters to illustrate such style.

Epistolary Styles dates between the fourth and sixth century CE (well past the particular period with which this study is concerned), and it is interesting that in comparison with the earlier handbook, Epistolary Types, in both theory and in the number of types of letters proposed, the later handbook is greatly developed suggesting that epistolary theory had become more complex. So while both handbooks are concerned with developing a theory of letter writing and as a consequence with the rhetorical matter of selecting the proper response to a situation, in particular selecting the type of letter appropriate to the sender's relationship with the addressee and the particular occasion, neither specifically relates letter writing to the five traditional aspects of rhetorical practice: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery; or to the three traditional species of rhetoric, judicial, deliberative and epideictic.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup>Reed, 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories', pp. 294-314, surveys what each epistolary theorist and rhetorician states about letter writing and relates it to each of the five aspects of rhetoric and the matter of species. He concludes that what overlap exists between epistolary traditions and rhetorical practices is primarily functional and not formal. However, Hughes, Early, p. 27, suggests that some of the letter types in the handbooks represent a direct borrowing of technical rhetorical terminology from rhetorical handbooks; for instance the 'advising' (συμβουλευτικός) letter type is related to the species of deliberative (συμβουλευτικός) rhetoric. But as Reed ('Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories', pp. 299-301) notes, 'the similarities are probably due to common communicative practices in culture'; and common terminology possibly represents common cultural concerns and situations which could be addressed by a variety of communication



In sum, based on the evidence of the epistolary theorists, the ancient rhetoricians who comment on letter writing, and the epistolary handbooks, the only matter which overlapped between epistolary theory and the practice of rhetoric was the matter of style. Even when style was discussed, it never was discussed in the technical terms found in rhetorical handbooks. Further, when matters of style were addressed, it was always to distinguish epistolary style from the style of rhetorical oration.

### 3.5. The Greek Letter Form

So far various aspects of the Greek epistolary tradition have been examined, yet the practice of writing letters and the letters themselves have not been discussed. In the following survey the Greek letter form will be examined in general terms, with the Greek epistolary opening and closing conventions being examined in greater detail. While the spectrum of Greek epistolary literature is broad, encompassing numerous kinds and types of letters, this survey will concentrate on the private documentary letters. However, reference will also be made to official letters in order to help establish a broad comparative literary context for the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians.

This survey is a critical and selective summary based on the extensive and detailed survey of the Greek

---

modes. Further the 'names' for the letter types have more divergent terms than synonymous terms with respect to ancient rhetorical terminology. The fact of semantic overlap does not prove a singular theoretical perspective operating in both practices.

documentary letter tradition in the publications of J.L. White, most extensively in the book, Light from Ancient Letters.

### 3.5.1. The Basic Form of the Greek Letter

For nearly six hundred years, 300 BCE to 300 CE, the basic epistolary form or structure and the standard epistolary conventions of the Greek letter remained fairly constant.<sup>118</sup> Whether this is a result of elementary instruction in letter writing in hellenistic secondary education or simply the essential nature of epistolary communication is hard to determine.<sup>119</sup> What seems clear is that when letter writing became a widespread means for private communication between families, friends and business associates, the basic letter form emerged and remained.

The letter form has three essential parts: (1) letter opening which generally included an address (naming the sender and/or the recipient) and a salutation (a simple or extended greeting formula); (2) the letter body, generally with a transition or introductory formula at the beginning and with possible ending formulas or signals at the end of the letter body; (3) the letter closing which was usually a simple final greeting, but could include an extended greeting section, a health wish, and other special closing conventions.

---

<sup>118</sup>Exler, Form, p. 12; Doty, Letters, p. 13; Aune, New Testament, p. 163; Malherbe, Ancient, p. 6.

<sup>119</sup>Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 6-7.



White has identified the function of the three parts.<sup>120</sup> The opening and closing conventions work to maintain contact between the letter parties, with the degree of 'friendliness' depending on the prior relationship. The letter body works to serve the specific occasion which prompted the letter, generally either to disclose or seek information or to make a request.

Understanding how the basic form was applied and adapted to various epistolary situations depends chiefly on how one classifies the various kinds of letters. Recognizing that there were many occasions in which a letter crosses into several categories, it is convenient for the sake of comparison to look at three epistolary types based primarily on the social setting, but also on the form and content. Documentary private letters are essentially the exchange of a letter(s) between two private parties (not necessarily individuals) in order<sup>to</sup> transact some personal matter. White suggests three functions for the private documentary letter: (1) maintain contact; (2) to convey information; (3) to make requests or to give instructions/commands.<sup>121</sup> Within this set of letters he identifies several specific types of private letters: (1) introduction and recommendation; (2) petition; (3) family; (4) memoranda.<sup>122</sup> A second type of letter is the official

---

<sup>120</sup>White, Light, pp. 198, 219.

<sup>121</sup>White, Light, p. 197.

<sup>122</sup>White, Light, pp. 193-97, in these discussions he gives a sample letter and analyzes the form and conventions used in this letter type. However in a later article ('Ancient Greek Letters', pp. 88-95) he omits the memoranda, and adds royal correspondence. Aune, New Testament, pp. 162-63, suggests six types of private letters, but does not provide any samples or analysis: (1)

letter, letter(s) exchanged between two parties, generally individuals who hold some official office or execute some official function, in order to transact affairs of state or government. A third type of letter are literary letters. These letters are primarily found in the letter collections or writings of ancient authors. Literary letters transverse a wide spectrum from being private correspondence between real individuals to fictional letters; what helps to distinguish them is their artistic and aesthetic style and subject, plus often their length.

In examining the letter form and epistolary conventions found in the private and official letter types, emphasis will be on the opening and closing conventions. Aspects of the letter body will only be examined as they are judged to pertain to the opening and closing as in the transition formulas from the letter opening to the letter body.

### 3.5.2. Private Documentary Letters

#### 3.5.2.1. Letter Opening

The opening convention (address and salutation) in the private letters are fairly standard and consistent. In a vast majority of the letters, no matter their type (i.e. family, business, recommendation, etc.) the customary letter opening is as follows: X [nominative] (to) Y [dative], χαίρειν ('greeting').<sup>123</sup> This basic opening is

---

request or petition, (2) information, (3) introduction, (4) order or instruction, (5) family, and (6) business.

<sup>123</sup>The infrequent variations of the opening format are catalogued discussed by Exler, Form, pp. 23-68. See also, White, 'Epistolary Formulas', pp. 290-95.



often expanded by the use of epithets or relational terms to qualify one or both names of the address, and by the use of a qualifying adjective or adverb (πολλά, πλείστα, 'much', 'many') for the salutation. By the second century BCE, the opening salutation very often syntactically added a health wish, χαίρειν καὶ ἔρρῶσθαι ('greeting and (good) health'). The significant variant is the petition letter which generally follows the formula: (To) Y [dative], χαίρειν, X [nominative].

Family letters almost always expressed the familial relationship by qualifying the name of the addressee, but rarely, if ever, the sender. Family terms like ἀδελφῶι, ἀδελφῇ, πατρί, μητρί, υἱῶι, θυγατρὶ, did not always express the literal relationship. 'Brother' was often used as a general term of friendship; and 'sister' often referred to the wife (who could be the actual sister). Κυρίῳ and κυρίῳ most often referred to the sender's mother and father. During the Roman empire, terms of endearment which were not relationally specific began to be used.<sup>124</sup> Regarding the greeting, πολλά ('many'), πάσαι ('very many'), and πλείστα ('very many') usually was added to χαίρειν.<sup>125</sup> All these qualifications enhanced the personal and relational tone of the letter.

Though business letters use the same basic opening formula, the qualifying expressions are less familial as

---

<sup>124</sup>White, 'Epistolary Formulas', pp. 290-91.

<sup>125</sup>White, 'Epistolary Formulas', p. 291, charts usage chronologically, πολλά was used 200 BCE-300 CE; πάσαι, 200 BCE-100 BCE; πλείστα, 100 BCE-300 CE; πλείστα was most commonly used, 100 CE-300 CE.

one would expect. Often when the sender or addressee is qualified it is in legal like terms, patronymic, guardian, occupation and address.<sup>126</sup> Legal agreements and contracts in epistolary form preferred the opening convention: (To) Y [dative] παρὰ X, (without a greeting).

Petition letters, as noted above, used a distinctly different address formula: (To) Y [dative], χαίρειν, X [nominative], or (To) Y [dative] παρὰ X, (without a greeting). The formula seems to reflect the sender's deference or respect for the addressee who is almost always a superior in social rank, and upon whom the sender is always dependent upon for an action. Generally these letters avoid familial terms with respect to the address and avoid qualification of the greeting.

Opening conventions often included an extended health wish/prayer as part of the opening salutation, especially in period, 300 BCE to 200 BCE. The extended health wish was comprised of two parts, a wish or prayer about the addressee's health, and an assurance about the sender's health.<sup>127</sup> One of the interesting features of this Greek epistolary health formula is that while it appears formulaic, almost no two are exactly alike.<sup>128</sup> In the period, 200 BCE to 200 CE, an abbreviated health wish combined with the greeting: χαίρειν καὶ ἔρρωσθαι. Sometimes the phrase, διὰ παντός, was added to this formula

---

<sup>126</sup>White, Light, letters 30-33.

<sup>127</sup>See White, Light, letters 6, 13-16, 18, 22, 24, 26, 28, 34-36, 39-41

<sup>128</sup>Exler, Form, p. 106; White, Light, p. 201; and 'Epistolary Formulas', pp. 295-99.



with the sense, 'greeting and continual good health'. In the period, 200 CE to 300 CE, the health wish expanded once again and became a distinct formula from the greeting, for example, '...πλεῖστα χαίρειν, πρὸ μὲν πάντων εὐχομαι σε ὀγιαίνειν...' ('...very many greetings. Before all else I pray that you are well...').<sup>129</sup> At this same time, this health wish could be written as a prayer of supplication before some deity on the recipient's behalf, as in this example, '...καὶ τὸ προσκύνημα ὑμῶν ποιοῦμε ἡμερησίως παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ Σεράπιδι' ('...and I make supplication for you daily before the lord Serapis').<sup>130</sup>

Letters of petition have no additional health wish, prayers of supplication, or extended greeting as part of the opening.

### 3.5.2.2. Letter-Body

The letter body in the private letters functioned primarily to effect the occasion of the letter.<sup>131</sup> In letters of petition and recommendation the letter body was particularly stylized in format and stereotypical formulas in order to achieve the letter's primary intent.<sup>132</sup> In

---

<sup>129</sup>White, Light, letter 103b.

<sup>130</sup>White, Light, letter 113. White, 'Epistolary Formulas', p. 296, details further development of the health wish. See also Koskeniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 139-45.

<sup>131</sup>For a detailed examination of the Greek letter-body, its form and use of formulas, see White, Form and Function.

<sup>132</sup>As the letter body and these types of letters do not particularly pertain to the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians, they are not discussed in detail. For letters of recommendation, see White, Light, pp. 193-94; Kim, Form and Structure; for letters of petition, White, Light, pp. 194-96, and Form and Structure.

family letters, the primary intent is to maintain contact, perhaps with the body conveying information about the sender's welfare or seeking information about the recipient's welfare.<sup>133</sup> Many family letters are brief and very stereotypical in expression and style, probably because of the use of a scribe and because the sole purpose of the letter is simply to make contact.<sup>134</sup>

The formulas for opening the letter body, signaling the transition to the letter body and often stating the letter's purpose are variable, but with some identifiable patterns. There are a number of formulas associated with conveying or seeking information. Particular note should be made of two disclosure phrases: (1) γίνωσκε ὅτι ('know that'), and (2) γινώσκειν σε θέλω ὅτι ('I want you to know that'). The shorter imperative phrase gave way to the longer, more polite phrase in the period of the Roman empire. It was also at this time that the 'motivation for writing phrase', γέγραφα οὖν σοι ὅπως εἰδῇς ('therefore I wrote to you in order that you may know'), found at the end of the letter-body disappeared, suggesting the letter purpose was now identified with the disclosure formula at

---

<sup>133</sup>Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 110-17, suggests that such family letters fail to utilize the full-potential of the letter and in essence, have no letter body. However, this is to over emphasize the function over form. The form of the letter clearly indicates a body, however, brief; and even if the body only conveys information which is corollary to the opening and closing concerning the welfare of the letter parties, it is still the conveyance of information.

<sup>134</sup>See for example, the family letters sometimes sub-classified as 'letters from soldiers', J.G. Winter, 'In the Service of Rome: Letters from the Michigan Collection of Papyri', Classical Philology 22 (1927), pp. 237-56; White, Light, letters 101-105.



the beginning of the letter body.<sup>135</sup> There are also introductory phrases based on receiving information which indicate that the letter is designed as a response to this information.<sup>136</sup> A number of other variable phrases at the opening of the letter-body indicate that the letter deals with a request or command; and interestingly, most of the phrases refer to the background situation, either a previous letter the recipient has ignored, or that the sender has not received a letter from the addressee.<sup>137</sup>

Within the letter body there are often stereotypical phrases which serve as transitions from one topic to another.<sup>138</sup> The preposition, *περί δέ* (similarly *ὑπέρ*), with the genitive often signals a new topic; sometimes it refers to a matter about which the recipients have inquired or about which the sender previously wrote.<sup>139</sup> This phrase is also occasionally used to introduce the letter body.<sup>140</sup> The

---

<sup>135</sup>White, Light, p. 207; examples, (1) letters 41, 42, 59, 72; (2) 91, 101, 102, 104b, 110, 114.

<sup>136</sup>Examples, *καθάπερ ἡμῖν ἔγραψας* ('Just as you wrote us'), White, Light, letters 1, 17, 26, 81, 91; *έκομισάμην τὸ παρὰ σοῦ ἐπιστόλιον ἐν ᾧ γράφεις* ('I received your letter in which you write...'), White, Light, letters 18, 34, 35, 45, 49, 64, 65, 83, 93.

<sup>137</sup>For examples and commentary, see White, Light, pp. 208-211, and 'Epistolary Formulas', pp. 303-04.

<sup>138</sup>See White, Light, p. 211, and 'Epistolary Formulas', pp. 307-08, for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>139</sup>White, Light, pp. 208, 211. For more detailed examination, see M.M. Mitchell, 'Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians', NovT 31 (1989), pp.229-56, especially 236-250; E. Baasland, 'Die περί-Formel und die Argumentation (ssituation) des Paulus', Studia Theologica 42 (1988), pp. 69-87.

<sup>140</sup>White, Light, letters 1, 4, 9, 15, 20, 49, 62, 68, 85, 91, 101, 106b, 107.

conjunctions, οὖν, διό, ὅθεν, and the phrase, καλῶς ποιήσεις ('you would do well'), are frequently used to make the transition from background remarks to a request statement. Sometimes disclosure formulas with the appropriate conjunction introduce a new subject. Other common transitions are, δὲ καί and ὁμοίως δὲ καί.

Frequently the close of the letter body is signaled by various phrases or expressions. White notes three different types of expressions which tend to signal the close of the letter body.<sup>141</sup> First, there are formulas which request information: 'Write in order that I may know', 'Write back to me'. The second kind of statements are those which conclude letters of request or command that persuade, coerce or threaten the recipient to do as asked. Interestingly, between equals, the statement has the tone of appreciation: 'For by doing this, I will be favored'. In administrative letters or letters from a superior, the tone is more assertive: 'Make it your concern...', 'Therefore do not act otherwise'. Third, there are statements of reassurance or concern, 'Therefore, do not be anxious' and 'Moreover, if you ever have need of anything, write', and concluding transitions, 'Therefore, finally'. White also notes that visit topoi often comes at the end of the letter-body.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup>White, Light, pp. 204-07, provides examples and commentary.

<sup>142</sup>White, Light, pp. 197, 205. See also Mullins, 'Visit Talk', pp. 350-58.



## 3.5.2.3. Letter Closing

Following the closure of the letter-body, the letter closing employs a number of conventions to conclude the letter.<sup>143</sup> The standard epistolary closing was a final greeting, most commonly the simple word, ἔρρωσο ('farewell'), which probably originated as a kind of health wish. Most letters of petition and certain business letters, especially those where the opening placed the addressee's name first ('To Y from X'), used the simple word, εὐτύχει, which later in about the first century CE took the form, διευτύχει ('farewell' or 'best wishes'). In many business correspondence, especially those which transact some kind of contract, there is no final salutation, but instead the letter closes with a signature or an oath phrase.<sup>144</sup>

Expansion of the simple final greeting possibly occurred because the single-word final greeting lost any sense of being a health wish.<sup>145</sup> Thus, health wish formulas began being added preceding the final greeting, mostly in family type letters, for example, τὰ δ' ἄλλα χαρίζοισθ' ἑαυτῶν ἐπιμελόμενοι ἵν' ὑγιαίητε ('For the rest, you would favour us by taking care of yourselves that you stay

---

<sup>143</sup>Exler, Form, pp. 69-77, is more helpful than White, Light, pp. 198-202 on the closing formulas. See also, Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 151-54.

<sup>144</sup>Exler, Form, pp. 71, 127-32.

<sup>145</sup>In some family letters the simple final greeting is expanded by adding terms of endearment or respect, and/or by a phrase extending the final greeting to a group associated with the addressee (e.g. μετὰ τῶν σὼν πάντων), and/or by a temporal qualification (e.g. πολλοῖς χρόνοις); Exler, Form, pp. 74-77, provides numerous examples.

healthy').<sup>146</sup> In the latter half of the first century CE through the third century CE, the expanded health wish was abridged and syntactically combined with the final greeting to make the final greeting, a health prayer/wish, ἐρρωσθαί σε εὖχομαι (sometimes with βούλομαι instead) ('I pray (wish) that you are well').<sup>147</sup> The health wish, while stereotypical, probably expressed a sincere sentiment of regard for the addressee.

At the end of the first century BCE, the letter closing began including a greeting formula. By the end of the first century CE, the greeting formula was a regular closing element and had a standard form in the so-called family letters.<sup>148</sup> The greeting(s) preceded both the final health wish and the final greeting.

The greeting formula generally used a form of the verb, ἀσπάσασθαι, plus the object.<sup>149</sup> The verb was first used imperatively, directing the recipient to 'greet' a third person/party. Eventually, the third-person form also became common in which the sender conveyed greetings from a third party to the addressee or from a third party to a

---

<sup>146</sup>White, Light, letter 55.19-22. White, Light, pp. 201-02, notes that the formula developed; first, the enjoinder was to take care of ones 'body', which was replaced by the reflexive pronoun in about the first century BCE. Examples, White, Light, letters 28, 34, 35, 49, 60, 63-65, 69, 71, 73, 77-78.

<sup>147</sup>Examples, White, Light, letters 90, 98, 101, 103a, 103b, 104a, 104b, 105, 107, 108, 111, 112, 115.

<sup>148</sup>White, Light, p. 202; Exler, Form, p. 116; Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, p. 148. See also Mullins, 'Greeting', pp. 418-26.

<sup>149</sup>Examples, White, Light, letters 67, 83, 84, 94, 96, 99, 100, 101, 103a, 103b, 104a, 104b, 105, 108-13.



fourth party associated with the letter recipient. The variable combination of greetings could make the greeting(s) rather extensive. Sometimes the verb was modified by the adverb, *πολλά*, or the adverbial phrases, *πρὸ πάντων*, *πρὸ τῶν ὅλων*, which were attempts to intensify the greeting, and they eventually became conventional. The object of the verb was generally a proper name with or without an epithet; but it could also be a collective designation (e.g. *πάντας τοὺς ἐν οἴκῳ*). The greeting formula clearly reflects the function of the closing convention to maintain contact.

In some business letters, especially those of a more legal nature, an illiteracy formula closed the letter. Generally, after giving his name, the scribe added a first person statement that he had written the letter because of the illiteracy of the sender.<sup>150</sup> Such formulas are never found in family letters.

Some business letters which were actually legal documents included a signature in the closing. Family letters did not need a signature as the prescript served this function.<sup>151</sup> However, there are a few private letters in which the letter has a conclusion written in a second hand, most likely the sender's. Generally this signature or autographic statement comprised only the final greeting,

---

<sup>150</sup>Exler, *Form*, pp. 124-27, provides examples and commentary.

<sup>151</sup>Rare examples, PLond 423; PPetr. 2, 44.

occasionally the date and/or a postscript.<sup>152</sup> In family letters this convention was probably less to authenticate the letter than to convey in a direct and more personal way the sentiment of the sender.<sup>153</sup>

Many business type letters because of their legal function were dated; however, family letters also often included a date. The date generally came after the final greeting, in the order, year, month, day, but in less formal correspondence, the month and day.<sup>154</sup> It is not known if the dating served any function besides providing the date of writing.

#### 3.5.2.4. Summary

In summary, the Greek private documentary letter served many different functions resulting in a number of different kinds of private letters: family, business, petition, recommendation. Despite the different function and content of these different letters the form and epistolary conventions found in all these letters is remarkably similar. The family letter employs the widest range of epistolary elements in its fullest form:

Letter Opening:  
 address--(X [nominative] (to) Y [dative])  
 greeting--χαίρειν

---

<sup>152</sup>Examples, BGU 37, 106, 544, 615, 844, 1031; POxy 62, 66, 1025, 1063. Postscripts are written remarks after the final salutation, often a closing convention like the greeting(s) or the health wish, sometimes a supplementary message to the letter body, sometimes written in a second hand; examples, White, Light, letters 40, 63, 65, 85, 87, 94, 96, 100, 103-104a, 105, 106b, 110.

<sup>153</sup>Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 168-69.

<sup>154</sup>Exler, Form, pp. 78-98, provides an extensive listing and commentary.



opening health wish/prayer--various forms  
Letter body  
Letter Closing  
extended greetings--the verb ἀσπάζεσθαι plus  
object  
closing health wish--various forms  
final greeting--ἔρρωσο  
(date, postscript)

The petition letter used a different address ((To) Y [dative] χαίρειν, X [nominative]) and closing greeting (εὐτυχελ), as did some business letters. Letters of recommendation are distinguished by their conventional form in the letter body, otherwise using the customary opening and closing conventions. In all the different kinds of correspondence, the more familiar the letter parties were with each other, the more the opening and closing conventions were expanded and varied in order to maintain that personal relationship.

### 3.5.3. The Official Letter<sup>155</sup>

Though official letters are common among the Egyptian letter papyri, they are distinguishable by their formal context. In many ways letters of petition are similar, but they are distinct in their epistolary situation in that they are exchanged between two individuals and need not be addressed to an official. And while official letters often have the appearance of being between two individuals, they

<sup>155</sup>Helpful discussions of official letters, Welles, Royal Correspondence, passim; White, 'Ancient Greek Letters', pp. 93-95; Aune, New Testament, pp. 164-65; Exler, Form, passim. White, Light, pp. 5, 192n12, distinguishes between official/administrative letters and royal/diplomatic, both of which are classified as official in most other discussions. White (Light, p. 197) also discusses a small category of official correspondence known as *ὑπόμνημα* (memoranda), but as they are so specialized they are not relevant to this study.

chiefly were written between two parties because of their official capacity. Official letters were often posted for public viewing.

During the Greek and Roman rule of the Mediterranean area in 300 BCE to 300 CE, extensive bureaucracies developed for conducting official business between the 'central' government and those officials and representatives who executed administrative rule in the areas under its control.<sup>156</sup> Much of this business was conducted by correspondence. Most of this correspondence was written by official secretaries. While the epistolary setting varies based on the administrative structure which was relative to the historical period, remarkably, throughout this entire period the basic epistolary form and the kinds of conventions remained constant.

The letter opening is composed of the address and greeting in customary form for a Greek letter: X [nominative] (to) Y [dative], *χαίρειν* ('greeting'). Often the names within the address are qualified by titles, and except for some business letters, official correspondence is the only letter type which uses titles to qualify the names of the address.<sup>157</sup> Also, correspondence between officials who have a prior personal relationship often used terms and expressions of friendship to expand the address

---

<sup>156</sup>White, Light, pp. 9-18, 189-93, provides an extensive discussion of the relationship between the Greek and Roman administrative structure and letter writing; Aune, New Testament, pp. 164-63, provides a briefer summary.

<sup>157</sup>White, Light, letters 46, 47, 58, 76, 88.



and greeting.<sup>158</sup> There are examples of official letters from subordinates to superiors who use the opening formula, (To) Y [dative] παρὰ X, but they are all petitions.<sup>159</sup> Correspondence from an official to a collective like a city used the same opening convention: Πλάτων τοῖς ἐν Παθύρῃ ἱερεῦσι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς κατοικοῦσι χαίρειν ('Platon to the priests and other inhabitants at Pathyris, greeting').<sup>160</sup>

The body of official letters varied according to the epistolary purpose, such as decrees,<sup>161</sup> letters answering administrative or diplomatic enquiries, etc..<sup>162</sup> Aune, notes that the body of official letters, especially in the Roman period, deals with the following matters (1) bestowal of benefits, (2) restoration of land, (3) decisions and edicts, (4) arbitration, (5) resolutions of senate.<sup>163</sup>

The closing convention tended to be rather simple. A majority closed only with the final greeting, ἔρρωσο, with occasional modifications depending on the familiar relationship between the officials. Many official letters omitted the final salutation, especially those

---

<sup>158</sup>White, Light, letter 80; see also the examples in Exler, Form, pp. 50-56. The use of an extended health wish or greeting formula whether after the opening greeting or before the final greeting is rare in official letters.

<sup>159</sup>White, Light, letter 50, is an example.

<sup>160</sup>White, Light, letter 58, cf. letter 56.

<sup>161</sup>Example, White, Light, letter 88.

<sup>162</sup>White, 'Ancient Greek Letters', pp. 93-95.

<sup>163</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 165.

administrative letters which used an alternative address formula. Very often the date followed the final greeting.

The form and conventions of the official letters reveal how adaptable the basic Greek letter was to a variety of situations. What distinguishes an official letter is the epistolary context and the content of the letter body. In addition, the official letter differs from the private letter by the lack or brevity of the epistolary elements in the opening and closing which functioned to maintain the personal relationship between the letter parties.

#### 3.5.4. Summary

The Greek letter tradition stretching from 300 BCE to 300 CE remained remarkably constant in terms of form and epistolary convention. The basic letter form and conventions were adaptable to a variety of social situations. Yet, it was those same variable social situations which produced variations in epistolary practice. The family letter, a private letter generally exchanged between two individuals in order to maintain contact, expanded the basic opening and closing conventions in order to personalize and heighten the relational aspect of the letter. Equally, the petition letter used a distinctly different opening and closing conventions in order to establish a tone of respect and deference to the addressee. The formality of official letters was reflected in the lack of familiar qualifications of the opening and closing and in the use of titles in the opening address. In each case it is the opening and closing conventions



which signal the relational tone and social situation in which the letter is to be read.

#### 4. Hebrew Epistolary Literature<sup>164</sup>

Because Christianity emerged from the one area of the Greek and Roman empire where Hebrew remained an indigenous language among various people and in certain areas, it is possible that the epistolary practice of this language influenced the development of the Pauline letter tradition.<sup>165</sup> Indeed it is still argued by some that the primary influence on the distinctive Pauline letter form is Jewish epistolary practice.<sup>166</sup>

The extant corpus of documentary letters written in Hebrew is rather small, about forty-seven letters.<sup>167</sup> In addition to these Jewish letters written in Hebrew there are a number of Jewish letters written in Aramaic and Greek. The letters written in Hebrew stem from two distinct time periods and are distinguished by the type of

---

<sup>164</sup>For a general survey of such literature, D. Pardee, 'An Overview of Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', JBL 97 (1978) pp. 321-46, and Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters; P.S. Alexander, 'Epistolary Literature', in Jewish Writings of the Second Temple, ed. M.E. Stone (CRINT 2.2; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), pp. 579-96; and Aune, New Testament, pp. 175-80.

<sup>165</sup>The question of the languages used in first century CE Palestine is greatly debated, for a summary of the debate with the conclusion that Palestine was multilingual, see Porter, Verbal Aspect, pp. 111-17.

<sup>166</sup>I. Taatz, Frühjüdische Briefe: Die paulinische Briefe im Rahmen der offiziellen religiösen Briefe des Frühjudentums, NTOA, 16 (Göttingen: Vandernhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), pp. 102ff; and M. Goulder, 'The Pauline Epistles', in The Literary Guide to the Bible, ed. R. Alter and F. Kermode (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 479-80.

<sup>167</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 323.

material upon which the letter is written. This corpus does not include the letters found in the Hebrew Bible which are embedded in narrative material and contain only the letter body without any epistolary opening or closing.<sup>168</sup>

The approximately 40 Hebrew letters from the period, 630 to 596 BCE were all written on ostraca and originate from mainly two sites, Lachish and Arad.<sup>169</sup> Letters composed on ostraca material are generally shorter and refer to more domestic affairs than those on more durable material.<sup>170</sup> For instance, the letters from Arad are military correspondence dealing with the distribution of supplies.<sup>171</sup>

Then there are approximately eight letters from the period of the Second Jewish Revolt, 132-135 CE, written on papyrus, found in the Judean desert.<sup>172</sup> These letters range in concern from economic matters to military matters. Most

---

<sup>168</sup>O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 22-24; Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 330-31. A brief discussion of Jewish pseudepigraphal letters is in, R. Bauckham, 'Pseudo-Apostolic Letters', JBL 107 (1988), pp. 478-82.

<sup>169</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 325-29.

<sup>170</sup>White, Light, p. 213; Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 324.

<sup>171</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 327.

<sup>172</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 329-30; Y. Yadin, Bar-Kokhba (Jerusalem: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp. 124-139; G. Howard and J.C. Shelton, 'The Bar-Kokhba Letters and Palestinian Greek', Israel Exploration Journal 23 (1973), pp. 101-02; B. Lifshitz, 'Papyrus grecs du désert de Juda', Aegyptus 42 (1962) pp. 240-58.



of them are from the sender, Shimmon bar Kosbia, traditionally known as Bar Kokhba.

The analysis of these documentary letters reveals the following conventional epistolary form and features.<sup>173</sup> The first epistolary element is an address, which always included the name and/or an epithet of the addressee except in the rare instance of the absence of an address, and which often included the name and/or epithet of the sender. Second is the greeting, which may be included in the address or placed distinctly after the address, and which may be absent entirely. These two components form the letter opening and are discussed in further detail below. Third is a formulaic transition from the opening to the body of the letter with the early letters using the Hebrew word for 'and now' (וְעַתָּה); the later letters, 'that' (שֶׁ); and in a few letters the transition is omitted.<sup>174</sup> Fourth is the letter body whose first clause is either, (1) a rhetorical question of self-abasement, (2) a declarative statement, or (3) an expression of will.<sup>175</sup>

The opening and closing convention require further comment. The majority of the 7th/6th century BCE letters use the address: 'To Y [name and/or epithet of addressee], greeting formula (optional)'.<sup>176</sup> The presence or absence of

---

<sup>173</sup>This is a summary of Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 343-44; and Aune, New Testament, pp. 175-76

<sup>174</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 139.

<sup>175</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 339-40.

<sup>176</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 332-37. The other address options used less frequently include: (1) a familial address, X 'sends' (וְעַתָּה) greetings to Y, (2) X

the greeting may indicate the relationship of the sender to the recipient: where the greeting is present, the recipient is a superior to the sender.<sup>177</sup> An interesting variation occurs in three letters which appear to be familial correspondence: 'kinship term + X (name of sender) + 'wish' greeting + Y (name of addressee), followed by a blessing, 'I bless you to YHWH'.<sup>178</sup> Outside this familial address and one other exception, there is no mention of the sender's name in the early letters, a feature perhaps dictated by space limitation on the ostraca or by convention in which the letter carrier would convey the sender's identity.<sup>179</sup>

The Bar Kokhba opening was standard no matter the relationship of the letter parties: From X to Y, greeting; or in more detail: preposition 'ל' + X (name of sender) + preposition 'א' + Y (name of addressee and/or epithet) + the greeting, 'shalom' (לשלווה).<sup>180</sup> In addition, only the Bar Kokhba letters contained formal closings: either (1) a final greeting, (2) a final greeting plus a signature statement, or (3) a signature statement without a final greeting. The final greeting is always a form of the expression, 'Be well' (a variant of the opening greeting

---

says to Y, greeting, and (3) the absence of an address, so that the letter begins with greetings.

<sup>177</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 332-33.

<sup>178</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 334.

<sup>179</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 336-37.

<sup>180</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 333. Aune, New Testament, p. 175 incorrectly attributes this opening formula to the earlier letters.



which also uses the word, 'shalom').<sup>181</sup> The signature statement is composed of a signature or multiple signatures, usually of the sender and/or witnesses; or contains a verb phrase, '...wrote it'.<sup>182</sup> Both the opening and closing formulas of the Bar Kokhba correspondence, while distinctly Hebrew in vocabulary and grammar, exhibit a similarity in form to the Aramaic letters of the same time.<sup>183</sup> Both Hebrew and Aramaic opening and closing conventions of the first and second century CE are similar in pattern to the more common Greek opening and closing formulas: sender to addressee, followed by a greeting formula. This common epistolary pattern validates the observation, 'that documents written at the same time and in the same place are frequently similar in form even though the languages differ'.<sup>184</sup>

Another example of Hebrew letters are embedded in the Tannaitic literature.<sup>185</sup> Their dating is problematic, but possibly in the first century CE. These 'rabbinic' letters where the opening and closing is preserved, use the opening and closing conventions found in the Bar Kokhba

---

<sup>181</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 340-41. Examples are, papMur 42, 44, 46, 48.

<sup>182</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', pp. 341-42. Examples: signature of sender, papMur 42, 43, 46, 48; signature of witnesses or notary, papMur 42

<sup>183</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 344. Dion, 'The Aramaic "Family Letters"', pp. 68-70, notes the influence of Egyptian epistolary literature on both Aramaic and Greek letter writing.

<sup>184</sup>Pardee, 'Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', p. 334.

<sup>185</sup>The following summary is from, Pardee, Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters, pp. 183-211; Aune, New Testament, p. 176.

correspondence. What is particularly significant is that the correspondence is communal, from one Hebrew community to another with an authoritative stance of the sender over the recipients: 'From Simeon b. Gamaliel and from Yohanan b. Zakkai to our brothers in the Upper and Lower Galilee and to Simonia and to Obed Bet Hillel: Well being'.<sup>186</sup> A number of these letters were probably encyclicals as well.

Another aspect of Hebrew epistolography which might indicate the hellenization of the Greco-Roman world especially with regards to epistolography are the Jewish letters written in Greek.<sup>187</sup> Many of these are embedded in historical documents found in the Apocrypha of the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible. Some of these texts may have originally been written in Hebrew, others originally in Greek; they all exist in the Greek text of the Septuagint.

In 1 Maccabees, there are a number of letters. Many of them are by non-Jews and reflect typical Greek epistolary convention; others are Jewish letters. It is the Jewish letters which are in view in this discussion. The first Jewish letter, 1 Macc.5:10-13 contains no epistolary frame (opening and closing). 1 Macc. 12:6-18 contains a typical Greek prescript, 'Jonathan the High Priest, the Senate of the nation, the priests, and the rest of the Hebrew people, to our brothers of Sparta,

---

<sup>186</sup>Pardee, Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters, p. 187.

<sup>187</sup>M. Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period, 2 Vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981 ed.), pp. 1:110.



greetings' (12:6). There is no formulaic closing, but a final greeting and closing request.

In 2 Maccabees there are two Jewish letters. 2 Macc. 1:1-9 contains a typical Hebrew letter opening, 'To their Jewish brethren in Egypt, greetings from the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem and those in the land of Judea, good peace' (1:1). This is followed by <sup>a</sup>lengthy prayer wish (1:2-6) which precedes the letter body (1:7-9). There is no formulaic closing. 2 Macc. 1:10-2:18 opens with a typical Greek opening: X [nominative] to Y [dative], greetings + health formula, 'The people of Jerusalem and Judea, the Senate and Judas to Aristobulus, tutor of King Ptolemy...and to the Jews in Egypt, greeting and good health,' (1:10). Following the greeting and health wish, there is a thanksgiving prayer employing the Greek word, 'εὐχαριστοῦμεν'. There is no closing formula, though the closing may consist of a recapitulation of the letter request (2:16) and a doxology (2:17-18).

The Letter of Aristeas written from Alexandria in Egypt, actually an historical narrative, contains several letters (29-32, 35-40), with one being Jewish (41-46). The Jewish letter contains the following Greek conventional opening, 'Eleazar the High Priest to King Ptolemy, good friend, greetings. Good health to you and to Queen Arsinoe, your sister, and to your children; if that is so, it would be well, as we wish. We too are in good health,' (41). The letter ends with a typical Greek closing convention, 'farewell' (ἔρρωσο).

Another interesting insight into the relationship between Hebrew epistles and Greek letters is found in the opening of the letter found in 1 Esdras 6:7-22 (parallel with Ezra 5:7-17). In this letter the greeting, *χαίρειν*, translates the Hebrew, *שלום*, showing the semantic equivalence between the two words as epistolary greetings in two different epistolary traditions and in two different languages.<sup>188</sup>

Hellenization is very apparent in two sets of Jewish letters written in Greek. First, there are the two letters from the Bar Kokhba correspondence. These letters were sent by non-Jews who were apart of Bar Kokhba's army.<sup>189</sup> In one letter the reason for writing in Greek is stated, 'because a man could not be found to write in Hebrew'.<sup>190</sup> Both letters use the Greek letter opening and closing conventions: X to Y, greetings, and 'farewell'. Second, there are approximately fifty-three Greek papyrus letters written from a Jewish colony in Egypt, from around the third century BCE.<sup>191</sup> These letters generally use the standard opening convention, X to Y, greetings, and formulaic closings.<sup>192</sup> All this would be expected in

---

<sup>188</sup>Aune, New Testament, pp. 178.

<sup>189</sup>Yadin, Bar-Kokhba, p. 133.

<sup>190</sup>Yadin, Bar-Kokhba, p. 130; Howard and Shelton, 'The Bar-Kokhba Letters', p. 101.

<sup>191</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 179. These letters are collected in the Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum.

<sup>192</sup>See the examples, Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum, nos. 4-6, 135 424, 436, 439-444.



letters composed by Greek speakers and by letters most likely written by scribes.

In sum, the Hebrew opening and closing conventions have their distinctive formula. The formulas exhibit a variety which may be regional or represent a temporal development. The Hebrew letters exhibit an option not common in the Greek tradition, an extended wish prayer or salutation following the opening greeting. It is significant that at the time of the Bar Kokhba correspondence (132-135 CE), the opening and closing patterns are similar to the Greek practice suggesting possible confluence by the second century CE: the opening, 'X to Y' with a brief greeting, usually one word; the closing, a brief phrase or one word final greeting.

##### 5. General Purposes and Communication Dynamics of Ancient Letters

Having examined two different epistolary traditions, Greek and Hebrew, it is possible to suggest some general observations about the purposes and communication dynamics of these ancient letter traditions. In both ancient epistolary theory and in modern assessments of ancient letters the communication dynamics are generally discussed in terms of oral or conversational discourse. Given the literary and textual nature of letters, this assumption needs reconsideration. Equally, by examining the communication dynamics of ancient letters, the contours of the epistolary situation in which the sender and recipient(s) encounter each other via the letter-text, are clarified. First, the theory of letter writing will be re-

examined, this time, not to determine its relationship with the rhetorical tradition, but in order to establish what some ancient letter writers and theorists thought they were doing or should be doing when they wrote letters. Finally, several modern scholarly definitions<sup>of</sup> a letter and its purpose in the ancient world will be examined and discussed, particularly examining how the dynamics and conventions of letter writing negate the theory that ancient letter writing was analogous to a conversation.

### 5.1. Ancient Theories of Letter Writing

In ancient writers and in several of the epistolary handbooks, various theories concerning the purpose, nature and practice of letter writing were expounded. As noted in an earlier section, among these various theories, letter writing was perceived as a distinct practice from the practice of rhetorical oration.<sup>193</sup> Yet, in many of the comments made about the nature of letters, the letter is conceived as a substitute for oral conversation with a person and as conveying the actual presence of the person writing, suggesting a letter's nature and function is similar to a conversation. However, the statements regarding the way a letter should be written, reveal a theoretical distinction between a face-to-face encounter or conversation and the letter. This theory is exclusively limited to ancient writers commenting on Greek epistolary practice.

---

<sup>193</sup>See section 3.4. above.



5.1.1. Definitions of a Letter<sup>194</sup>

The idea that a letter represents one side of a dialogue is a theory mentioned by Demetrius (first century BCE), On Style (223), where he relates this idea as the theory of Artemon, the editor of Aristotle's letters. Demetrius' response is to point out the fact that a letter is more than a dialogue, in that it is committed to writing (hence like a 'gift'), therefore it must be more studied and plain in its style (224). Demetrius proceeds, then, in eleven more sections to clarify what he means by the plain style of a letter (225-35).<sup>195</sup>

Cicero (first century BCE) compares writing letters to a conversation: 'I have begun to write to you something or other without a definite subject, that I may have a sort of talk with you' (Ad Atticum 9.10.1), or 'Though I have nothing to say to you, I write all the same, because I feel as though I were talking to you' (Ad Atticum 12.53). Yet, he comments in another letter, 'Or what could give me greater pleasure, failing a tête-à-tête talk with you, than either to write to you, or to read a letter of yours?' (Ad Familiares 12.30.1). Cicero's remarks emphasize that a letter is a substitute, not the same as talking to someone. He betrays the conversational style in another comment where he acknowledges that letters have their own particular style: '...even the conventional style of letter

---

<sup>194</sup>The quotations in the following section are all taken from the Greek and Latin texts with English translation in Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 16-81.

<sup>195</sup>Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 13-14, lists the various instructions on letter style in the theorists, including Demetrius.

writing does not appeal to me' (Ad Familiares 4.13.1; cf Ad Familiares 2.4.1; Ad Atticum 9.4.1).

Seneca (first century CE) states, 'I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company or taking walks together, spontaneous and easy; for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them' (Epistulae Morales 75.1f). Equally he notes that a letter puts one in the presence of the letter writer: 'I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith...how much more pleasant is a letter which brings us real traces, real evidences of an absent friend' (Epistulae Morales 40.1). And what is that real trace and evidence? The recognition of the writer's handwriting. While Seneca's remarks are sentimental, they betray their own meaning for his remarks about presence only highlight the purpose of the letter, absence and separation. Similarly, the writer's handwriting is significant because it is a representation of the sender, not the sender, not a face-to-face encounter.

Even the later theorist, Pseudo-Libanius (fourth to sixth century CE), Epistolary Styles, confuses the matter, identifying letters with conversation, but distinct from everyday speech. First his comments on letters as conversation: 'A letter, then, is a kind of written conversation with someone from whom one is separated, and it fulfills a definite need. One will speak in it as though one were in the company of the absent person' (2). Again the recognition is on the absence and the 'as if'



nature of the letter versus conversation. Further, the conversational nature is betrayed by these comments, 'It is therefore fitting that someone who wishes to write letters not do so artlessly or indifferently, but with the greatest precision and skill' (1), and 'it is necessary that the person who wishes to write with precision not only use the proper mode of treating the subject matter, but that he also adorn the letter with excellence of style, and use the Attic style with moderation without, of course, falling into an unbecoming preciousness of speech' (46). In addition, after discussing forty-one different styles or tones a letter may adopt, he proceeds to instruct on a letter's clarity (48-49), length (50), the proper kinds of adornment (50), the absence of argumentation (50), and the absence of flattery and meanness (51). While the theorist may endorse a conversational nature for a letter, his instructions provide strictures which are distinct from the naturalness of conversation.

The theorists quoted above, and many not quoted, but who left their opinion, all had an ideal about the letter related to the nature of a dialogue or conversation. Despite the effort to define a letter by its conversational style, all the theorists seem very conscious of the epistolary situation, the absence of the addressee, the letter as a substitute for a face-to-face conversation, and the explicit written versus ~~oral~~ manner of the discourse.

### 5.1.2. The Impact of Letter Writing Theory on the Practice of Letter Writing

Who were the theorists and letter handbook authors writing for? Malherbe suggests that the letter handbooks, like Epistolary Types and Epistolary Style were used in the training of professional letter writers.<sup>196</sup> Other literary authors like Cicero and Seneca are reflecting on their cultured past-time of writing 'friendly' letters between social equals and for the public. Their letters, as noted above, are not the common everyday personal private letters which seek to communicate simple family news, conduct ordinary business matters, and handle private affairs. As White notes, 'It is evident that this self-conscious definition of the letter by epistolary theorists is more appropriate to the letter which was written as a cultivated form of correspondence between friends than to the simple correspondence required for the mundane occasions of ordinary folk'.<sup>197</sup>

When one compares the number of different letter types or styles which are mentioned in the handbooks, 21 by Pseudo-Demetrius, 41 by Pseudo-Libanius, with the corpus of letters from the various sources, ostraca, papyri, and literary channels like letter collections, the handbooks do not seem to have made much of an impact. W. Doty suggests that only the letter of recommendation is common to the

---

<sup>196</sup>Malherbe, Ancient, pp. 4, 6-7. See especially the introduction to Pseudo-Demetrius, Epistolary Types, which could be read as one professional writing to another.

<sup>197</sup>J.L. White, 'Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. to Third Century C.E.', Semeia 22 (1981), p. 91.



theorists and corpus of extant letters.<sup>198</sup> Of course, it is always difficult to assess the relationship between theory and practice. Yet, White concluded, 'epistolary theory was never able to assimilate or to control the practice of letter writing'.<sup>199</sup>

If, then, one is to understand the practice of letter writing, it is not from the theorists and their attempt to define and establish the ideal. The nature and practice of letter writing can only be determined from examining the letters themselves and from assessing their function within the epistolary context as demonstrated in each individual letter.

## 5.2. The Dynamics of Letter Writing in the Ancient World

In this section on the dynamics of letter writing, an effort is made to posit the basic purpose and function of letters in the hellenistic world. As a number of scholars have proposed such definitions of ancient letters, a number of their contributions will be critically examined. Then, using what, N. Petersen calls the sociology of letters, the fundamental components of the epistolary situation (or the basic communication dynamics of ancient letters) will be proposed.

### 5.2.1. Definitions of Ancient Letters by Recent Scholars

Based on the origin of letters as replacing oral messages, based on the definition of letters by the ancient

---

<sup>198</sup>Doty, Letters, pp. 10-11.

<sup>199</sup>White, Light, p. 190.

epistolary theorists, and based on the perceived oral nature of letters--the attempt to mimic a face-to-face conversation-- H. Koskenniemi identified three major functions of ancient letters.<sup>200</sup> First and most importantly is philophronesis which was the letter's attempt to maintain the friendly relationship between the letter parties. Particularly crucial to this function was the opening and closing conventions, especially as they were expanded and embellished in the family letter type. The second function is, parousia, or 'presence' which was the attempt by the letter to revive or perpetuate the relationship between the letter parties though physically separated by communicating the actual presence of the writer in the letter. The third function is the letter's attempt to carry on the dialogue between the letter parties, the omilia function. This third function is similar to the oral homily.

Koskenniemi is responsible through his analysis of the phrases and expressions and epistolary conventions found in the Greek letter papyri for demonstrating how the very traditional and stereotypical features of the letters, especially the family letters, still fulfilled the basic epistolary function of maintaining the relationship between the letter parties. His three functions potentially highlight the temporal dimension of any relationship: maintain what exists (past)--philophronesis, renew a sense of presence (present)--parousia, and create a dialogue (future)--omilia. The weakness of his analysis is that it

---

<sup>200</sup>Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 34-47.



stems from an understanding of a letter as an oral communication event. Koskenniemi's own three functions undermine this oral understanding. A letter exists because there is separation and absence. A letter does not eliminate this, it draws attention to it. A letter cannot create presence, nor be a substitute for presence. The very textuality of a letter means presence is deferred, an issue which needs elaboration below.

D. Aune suggests, 'Most letters, whether ancient or modern, are written communications addressed to individuals or groups from whom the sender is separated by distance or social status. The letter is therefore a substitute for oral communication and could function in almost as many ways as speech'.<sup>201</sup> Aune is an improvement on Koskenniemi by his recognition that the medium of a letter is a written text and that the context of a letter is separation. However, he still falls prey to this concept of the letter as somehow related to oral discourse. While it is true that a letter may perform an action,<sup>202</sup> it generally inscribes an action at the time of writing, 'I have done...', or requests an action from the time of reading, 'Will you...'. Perhaps Aune, like others, are 'fooled' in thinking letters are a substitute for conversation in that the specificity of the author/sender and reader/addressee

---

<sup>201</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 158.

<sup>202</sup>Violi, 'Letters', pp. 159-61, discusses the illocutionary force of a letter as a speech act, and concludes that it is rather limited. A 'thank-you' letter, for instance, is performative. Most all other letters operate on the basis of deferred time and spatial separation which severely limits the letter from functioning 'in almost as many ways as speech' as Aune suggests.

is so overt, and that the particularity of the writing and reading is so explicit as opposed to other texts, like narrative.<sup>203</sup>

J.L. White has been the most significant theorist in terms of the study of New Testament epistolary literature. His detailed analysis of ancient Greek documentary letters has so far determined most recent comparative analyses. He defines ancient letters as follows:

When we combine the epistolary theorists' comments about the letter with what we know from the actual practice, the following definition is warranted. The letter is a written message, which is sent because the corresponding parties are separated spatially. The letter is a written means of keeping oral conversation in motion. Regarding the essential purposes served by letter writing, the maintenance of contact between relatives and friends was sometimes sufficient motivation for writing. But, on most occasions, the sender had a more specific reason for writing; desiring either to disclose/seek information or needing to request/command something of the recipient.<sup>204</sup>

His three purposes for letter writing provide the best summation of the functions of ancient letters. A letter was not restricted to one of these purposes, but could be combined in any number of ways. In addition, his recognition of the medium as written, and context as separation, is helpful. Exactly how he means a letter keeps an oral conversation in motion is more difficult to determine. It is true that a letter attempts to perpetuate a prior relationship on the sender's part, i.e. maintain contact. A letter exists, however, because conversation is

---

<sup>203</sup>Violi, 'Letters', pp. 155-57, labels these two aspects of letter communication as 'effects of presence' and 'reality effect'.

<sup>204</sup>White, 'Greek Documentary Letter Tradition', p. 91.



not possible. His use of the word 'oral' is probably influenced by the ancient epistolary theorists, as he states in the opening sentence. His analysis of many of the epistolary formulas reveal the overt attempt to communicate a sense of intimacy between the letter parties, what White actually labels 'the writer's presence and disposition in writing'.<sup>205</sup> The use of personal expressions and other literary and textual devices to create a sense of intimacy is not the same as communicating the (oral) presence of the writer.<sup>206</sup>

Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of ancient letters is by W. Doty:

A definition: a letter is a literary product, intended for a private or public reader/s, originally or only formally in letter form. Letter form is distinguished by 1) being sent or intended for sending; 2) from a writer or from writers; 3) to an addressee or to addressees; 4) with greetings, conclusion, or other formally stylized components; and usually 5) with reference to or clear intent to be a letter.<sup>207</sup>

This thorough definition captures the manifold aspects of the ancient epistolary situation. Yet, a few lines later Doty comments, 'the epistolary form is intimately related to informal oral communication: in each case there is a sense of personal intimacy not at hand in more stereotyped written or oral modes'.<sup>208</sup> Perhaps there is a relationship between informal oral communication and letters. However,

---

<sup>205</sup>White, Light, p. 219.

<sup>206</sup>Violi, 'Letters', p. 156, suggests in his discourse analysis of letters, 'it [letters] produces an effect of immediacy derived from the interaction of particular textual strategies'.

<sup>207</sup>Doty, 'Classification', p. 193 (emphasis his).

<sup>208</sup>Doty, 'Classification', p. 193.

the textual and rhetorical devices which convey and create a sense of intimacy in letters, are just that, textually situated devices. One of the features of letters is the effort to create relational intimacy between the letter parties through the epistolary conventions.

The dependence on the ancient epistolary theorists for suggesting that letters ideally act as conversation has clouded recent efforts to define the nature and purpose of ancient letters. The attempt to somehow maintain a definition of letters as a kind of oral discourse is particularly problematic.

#### 5.2.2. The Communication Dynamics of Ancient Letter Writing

N. R. Petersen has formulated a sociological analysis of letters with respect to his study of papyrus letter PBGU 37 and Paul's letter to Philemon.<sup>209</sup> His interest in such an analysis is different from this study. His attempt at developing a sociology of letters is in order to understand the 'notions of symbolic forms and social arrangements' inscribed in a letter.<sup>210</sup> However, in his development of a sociological approach to letters, he has identified important aspects of the dynamics of letter communication in the Greco-Roman world.

In order to appreciate more fully the dynamics of letter writing, the epistolary context or situation needs further clarification.<sup>211</sup> The obvious context is that

---

<sup>209</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 53-65.

<sup>210</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, p. 53.

<sup>211</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, p. 53.



letters exist as a communication act due to a spatial separation between the letter parties.<sup>212</sup> Letters as a communication act which attempts to bridge the gap (without eliminating it), becomes an alternative form of social encounter between the sender and recipient(s). The letter primarily functions to establish or maintain a relationship when the letter parties cannot meet face-to-face.<sup>213</sup> This social encounter is governed by social convention on several levels: (1) the conventions of letter writing (much of which has been discussed above) and (2) the conventions of the relational or social status that exists between the letter parties (which has been briefly discussed above).

The first aspect of the letter communication is the 'presence' of the sender and addressee in the letter.<sup>214</sup> From a textual and literary perspective, though each letter infers a 'real' sender and a 'real' addressee, each exists as literary constructions, only made manifest through various textual or linguistic devices. In ancient letters the sender is made explicit when named in the address and when an autograph or signature statement concludes the letter. In addition, pronominally, the sender inscribes

---

<sup>212</sup>Violi, 'Letters', p. 156, states, 'this distance is a constitutive element in that it is often the main reason the letter exists in the first place'.

<sup>213</sup>The idea that the letter exists as an alternative or surrogate to a personal encounter is not essential to the epistolary context, but probably accurately reflects the perspective of Greco-Roman letter writing.

<sup>214</sup>See Violi, 'Letters', pp. 150-57. The following discussion is dependent on Violi, but his insights into the discourse nature of letters have been adapted to apply to ancient letter writing in the Greco-Roman world, and his professional jargon has been translated to the literary-rhetorical stance of this study.

his or her presence by the use of first person, even when the letter is transcribed by a scribe. The addressee only exists as complementary to and co-present with the inscribed sender. The dynamic of a letter is that the sender is writing to someone, whether that someone exists or is fictitious. Thus, the addressee is marked in the text explicitly through the address, and inscribed pronominally by the use of the second person.

In addition, the sender and addressee are inscribed in the text by the dual aspect of the space-time relationship common to letters. Letters often contain references, from the writer's point of view, to the place and time of writing with respect to the sender, and to the place and time of reading with respect to the addressee. This dual spatial and temporal aspect of letters, means the textual 'presence', depending on whether one is the sender/writer or the addressee/reader, of the other is deferred. The other's textual presence is always presented as elsewhere and in deferred time (in the future for the sender, in the past for the addressee). Perhaps what distinguishes a letter from other texts in which the deferral of author and reader is also a textual aspect, is that the sender/author and addressee/reader is generally specified and never an open class: anyone who reads a letter immediately knows whether he or she qualifies as the addressee.

Based on the above understanding of the dynamics of letter writing, four fundamental aspects of letter



communication in the ancient world are offered.<sup>215</sup> One, every letter presupposes some form of previous (past) relationship between the sender and addressee, even where a letter initiates a relationship, it presupposes a prior non-relationship. Two, every letter initiates a new event (present) in the relationship between the letter parties which is temporally tied to the time of writing and to the time of reception/reading. This event is textual: the letter text itself provides a nexus in which the sender/writer and addressee/reader meet. Three, every letter constitutes an obligation (future) in the form of a response which is additional to the reception/reading of the letter. In fact, the reading of the letter itself will constitute a response, for the letter purpose or message as a textual communication will reconstitute the relationship between the letter parties. Even a non-response as in ignoring the letter, is a response. Four, every letter inscribes the social context of the relationship between the letter parties through the rhetoric, style, tone, format, and the selected conventional elements of the letter text.

In summary, a letter may be defined as a written message sent to another party separated from the sender by time and space in order to effect the relationship between the two parties based on the cultural conventions of letter writing and social status.

---

<sup>215</sup>These four aspects are adapted from Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 63-65, where he presents 5 theses fundamental to a sociological understanding of letters.

## 6. Conclusion

The Greek epistolary literature has the largest spectrum of letter types which fall into three main categories, private, official and literary. The family letter as a kind of private letter exhibits the widest range of opening and closing conventions in order to effect the highly personal nature of this kind of letter. Ancient theorists ideally conceived of the letter as a type of conversation or one-half of a dialogue, but actual practice necessitated the development of conventions which fit the epistolary situation where the letter parties are separated in time and space. The Greek letter tradition probably developed from official communication into more widespread private communication with the friendly letter becoming a sophisticated and cultured extension of the basic family letter. This development led to the letter becoming a communication context for philosophical and other kinds of treatises for public reading.

There is not as much evidence of the development of the Hebrew and Aramaic epistolary literature. What few letters which are extant reveal is a basic documentary private letter. There appears to be evidence of a possible confluence of the opening and closing conventions imitating the Greek letter in the late first century CE as preserved in the Bar Kokhba correspondence. Both letter traditions use a form of a peace wish in the opening and closing which functions like the health wish in the Greek letter. The Aramaic letter has a berakah formula which is similar to



the Greek προσκύνημα formula, both of which may be added to the opening convention.

Understanding the dynamics of ancient letter communication helps illumine the letter form and conventions. Each element of the basic letter form, the opening, the body, and the closing, function in relation to the epistolary situation. In all three epistolary traditions, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, the opening and closing inscribe the relational context for the epistolary situation. Depending on the various social contexts, the opening and closing conventions could be slightly or drastically altered, setting the tone and relational perspective for the letter message or purpose.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE EPISTOLARY OPENING AND CLOSING IN THE PAULINE LETTER TRADITION

#### 1. Introduction

In the last chapter the ancient epistolary context for letter writing in the Greco-Roman world was examined with respect to the Greek and Hebrew epistolary traditions, determining their basic letter form, in particular their opening and closing conventions, then positing the dynamics of ancient letter writing in general. In this chapter, the Pauline letter tradition will be surveyed in a similar fashion, but more particularly, to examine the standard features of the Pauline opening and closing conventions.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the features of the epistolary traditions surveyed in the previous chapter will be used as a basis for a comparison and contrast with the Pauline letters in order to highlight the literary and rhetorical adaptation of the various epistolary traditions evident in the Pauline

---

<sup>1</sup>The literature is vast, but important to this study are: Doty, Letters, pp. 21-47; Aune, New Testament, pp. 183-212; Funk, Language, pp. 250-74; White, 'Saint Paul', pp. 433-44; idem, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1739-51; idem, 'Ancient Greek Letters', pp. 96-100; Roller, Formular; Schnider and Stenger, Studien, passim; Goulder, 'The Pauline Epistles', pp. 479-502; P. Schubert, 'Form and Function of the Pauline Letters', Journal of Religion 19 (1939), pp. 365-77; C.J. Roetzel, The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context (London: SCM, 1982, 2nd ed.), passim; L.E. Keck, Paul and His Letters, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988, 2nd ed.), passim.



opening and closing. The goal then is to establish the basic nature of the Pauline letter opening and closing, and to examine the continuity and discontinuity of Pauline practice within the context of other ancient letter traditions.

The Pauline letter tradition represents the earliest Christian writings.<sup>2</sup> The Pauline letters also possibly represent the genesis of a distinctive Christian literary tradition, the Christian letter of instruction.<sup>3</sup> In this survey of the seven authentic Pauline letters, the basic form of the Pauline letter opening and closing will be examined, then secondly, the inscribed epistolary situation or social context in which the Pauline letter tradition functioned and the nature of the communication dynamics of the Pauline letter will be explored.

## 2. The Pauline Letter Form

Pauline letters conform to the basic form or structure of ancient letters, particularly the Greek letter: an opening, a body, and a closing. In addition, some of the Pauline epistolary conventions used in the various structural parts of the letter appear to be adapted or modified conventions from other epistolary traditions, and some epistolary conventions found in the Pauline letters are innovative and not found outside the Pauline letters. The standard Pauline letter form consisted of (1) the

---

<sup>2</sup>Koester, Introduction, vol. 2, pp. 1-5; C.F.D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982, 3rd ed.), pp. 9-18.

<sup>3</sup>White, 'Saint Paul', pp. 433-44; idem, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1739-55.

opening with the address, greeting, and the thanksgiving or blessing, (2) the body with an introductory formula and various body-closing devices, and (3) the closing with extended greetings, a final benediction and often some other optional closing convention.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1. The Letter Opening<sup>5</sup>

The initial formal unit of the Pauline letters conforms to a mixture of Greek and Jewish epistolary convention with some unique adaptations. The form is primarily like the Greek letter with the standard format, 'X to Y, greetings'. The basic components of the opening or prescript are the address which includes the sender(s) or superscription, the addressee(s) or adscription, and the greeting.

#### 2.1.1. The Sender and Co-Sender(s)

The interesting feature of the Pauline superscription is the way the sender is described or designated and the frequent addition of co-senders. In the authentic Pauline

---

<sup>4</sup>There is some debate over the form of the Pauline letter. Funk, Language, p. 270, after culling earlier form analyses of Pauline letters posits: '(1) salutation (sender, addressee, greeting); (2) thanksgiving; (3) body, with its formal opening, connective and transitional formulas, concluding "eschatological climax" and travelogue; (4) paraenesis; (5) closing elements (greetings, doxology, benediction)'. While there are some variations as to the items designated under each of the five main parts, Funk's structure is adopted by many, Doty, Letters, p. 27; Roetzel, Letters, pp. 29-40; White, Form and Function, p. 45. In a later article, White, 'Ancient Greek Letters', p. 97, adopts a three part structure similar to the one adopted for this study.

<sup>5</sup>For the Pauline letter opening, see Doty, Letters, pp. 29-31; Aune, New Testament, pp. 184-86; White, 'Epistolary Literature', p. 1740; Schnider and Stenger, Studien, pp. 4-41.



letters, the sender is Παῦλος, who describes his own status by the titles of ἀπόστολος (Rom. 1.1; 1 Cor. 1.1; 2 Cor. 1.1; Gal. 1.1), δοῦλος (Rom. 1.1, used with the title, ἀπόστολος; Phil. 1.1), or δέσμιος (Phlm. 1).<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians, probably the earliest letter in the New Testament canon, has no title with the sender's name. The titles are usually stated with some further qualification. The most common qualification is the genitive of possession of the name Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus, i.e. Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Several of the letters (Rom. 1.5; 1 Cor. 1.1; 2 Cor. 1.1; Gal. 1.1) include a reference to the agency by which the title was conferred, i.e. διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, with Romans also stating the end for which the title is meant: κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ (Rom. 1.1).

The form of the sender element has no formal parallel in Greek letters. Usually the sender was not qualified, not even in family type letters. In official letters, both diplomatic and imperial, the sender often identified himself with the appropriate titles.<sup>6</sup> The use of titles in the Pauline correspondence may convey an official tone, establish authority, and assert the credentials or right to be heard.<sup>7</sup> Pauline letters often meant to effect some change in the community addressed so the official tone or reference to the sender's credentials were probably key

---

<sup>6</sup>White, Light, letters 46, 76 (diplomatic); letter 88 (imperial); letters 1-4 (official letters without titles). Often with official letters the title was stated on the letter 'envelope'.

<sup>7</sup>The official tone partially depends on how the various titles were perceived by the readers.

towards this end. It is interesting that the letters to the Romans and the Galatians have the longest qualifying phrases with respect to the sender, in each case establishing a particular perspective on the identity or role of the sender in the particular epistolary situation.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in the letter to Philemon, the sender describes himself as a δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, establishing a definite atmosphere to the letter by using the prisoner motif as a significant rhetorical device.<sup>9</sup>

In six of the seven letters, co-senders are listed, with Romans being the only exception.<sup>10</sup> In five letters the co-senders are specifically named,<sup>11</sup> while Galatians uses a collective designation for the co-senders, καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ πάντες ἀδελφοί (all the brothers who are with me). The mention of co-senders is rare if nonexistent in Greek letters, but not uncommon in Jewish letters.<sup>12</sup> M.L. Stirewalt suggests with regard to Jewish letters, 'The multiple senders stood ready to witness both to the fact

---

<sup>8</sup>Roetzel, Anatomy, pp. 32-33.

<sup>9</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 89-199.

<sup>10</sup>On the use of co-senders in the Pauline letters; M. Prior, Paul the Letter Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy (JSNTSup 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 37-45, follows Bahr, 'Paul and Letter Writing', p. 476, suggesting the named co-senders are co-authors, but simply because Pauline letters are unusual in naming a co-sender does not mean they functioned as co-authors; but see also Roller, Formular, pp. 153-87; Richards, Secretary, pp. 153-58.

<sup>11</sup>1 Cor., Sosthenes; 2 Cor., Timothy; Phil., Timothy; 1 Thess., Silas and Timothy; Phlm., Timothy.

<sup>12</sup>For Jewish letters, see Taatz, Früjüdische Briefe, pp. 18-101. For Greek letters, Prior, Paul the Letter Writer, pp. 38-39.



that a letter had been written and to the content of the message'.<sup>13</sup>

The reference to multiple senders in Paul's letters creates two possible effects. First, it confers authority of some kind to the listed co-sender(s) in relation to Paul. The mention of the name of a co-sender also probably implied some prior or future relationship of the co-sender with the recipients. Doty's suggestion that the named co-senders were related to the use of named couriers or messengers in Greek letters seems unwarranted as the co-senders in Pauline letters were rarely the letter carriers, since other carries are sometimes named in the letter.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, the listing of co-sender(s) may have conveyed that the letter not only emanated from an apostolic figure but from an established, recognized Christian group.<sup>15</sup> This would have prevented Paul's letter being received as the product of a single authority figure.

---

<sup>13</sup>M.L. Stirewalt, 'The Letter from Paul to Philemon: The Letter-Setting', unpublished paper, p. 4, quoted in Doty, Letters, p. 30n20.

<sup>14</sup>Doty, Letters, p. 30. In several Pauline letters, the possible letter carrier is alluded to, but never specifically called such, 1 Cor: co-sender, Sosthenes; carrier, Timothy or Stephanas; 2 Cor.: co-sender, Timothy; carrier, Titus; Phil.: co-sender, Timothy; carrier, Epaphroditus; in Rom., Gal. and Phlm. the carrier is not alluded to. Greek letters mentioned the messenger or courier, but not as part of the superscription, White, Light, letters 6, 11, 18, 34, 58, 77-79, 89, 94, 105.

<sup>15</sup>E. Ellis, 'Paul and his Co-Workers', NTS 17 (1970/71), pp. 437-52, suggests that the Pauline cohorts called 'brother(s)' refers to a specific group of co-workers. While not all the references to 'brother(s)' is such, some may merely refer to fellow Christians, the use of 'brother' as a designation for the co-senders may be more technical than Ellis' co-worker.

2.1.2. The Recipients

The recipients in the Pauline letters are not only named, but usually described in terms of their spiritual status. A cataloguing of the various descriptions reveals an interesting variety. The initial address in 1 Thessalonians is the simplest, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ θεσσαλονικέων (to the church of the Thessalonians). Galatians is very similar, but uses the plural of 'church'. 1 and 2 Corinthians are also similar, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, with the noun qualified by the genitive phrase, τοῦ θεοῦ, followed by the participial clause, τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ. In Romans and Philippians the address begins, πᾶσιν (to all), with Romans adding, 'who are beloved of God in Rome'; Philippians adding, 'the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi', plus, 'including the overseers and deacons'.<sup>16</sup> The addrescription in Philemon most resembles the conventional Greek letter with the naming of specific individuals as the addressees, but the final named recipient in Philemon is a corporate group: 'To Philemon...to Apphia...to Archippus'..., 'to the church in your house'. In Philemon, each individual named is further identified by a relational qualification with respect to the sender, respectively, 'our beloved and fellow-worker, our sister, our fellow-soldier'; each qualification representing a

---

<sup>16</sup>Three of the letters, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Thessalonians add an additional qualification to the spiritual status of the addressee: Romans, 'called as saints'; 1 Corinthians, 'to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, theirs and ours'; and 1 Thessalonians, 'in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'.



Christianizing of the familial terms of endearment used in Greek family letters.

Two features distinguish the designation of the recipients in the address. One, they all are community designations, including Philemon, a feature which resembles some Greek official letters and the official Jewish Bar Kokhba and Mishnaic letters.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the basis for this practice, it distinguishes the Pauline letter from the Greek private, family or personal letters, and sets an official tone to the epistolary situation.

The second aspect is the explicit Christianizing of the sender-recipient relationship by the exclusively spiritual description of the recipient(s) (and the sender also). This is most explicit in 1 Corinthians where the motif of *κλητός* (called) is used four times in the sender-recipient designation (1.1; 1.2, twice; 1.9). Christianizing the terms which describe the addressees has the effect of establishing the relational tone of the letter or the epistolary relationship between the letter parties as distinctly spiritual or religious. This implies a unique relational or social context for the Pauline letters.

### 2.1.3. The Greeting

The opening greeting formula found in the Pauline letters is a distinctive epistolary feature. Nowhere

---

<sup>17</sup>H. Elsom, 'The New Testament and Greco-Roman Writing', in Literary Guide, pp. 570-72, suggests that Paul is explicitly drawing on Greek imperial legislative writing; Taatz, Frühjüdische Briefe, pp. 102ff., suggests the influence of Jewish epistolary practice behind this feature.

besides the Pauline epistles or later Christian letters is this greeting formula found in extant epistolary documents.<sup>18</sup> Two key questions emerge: One, what is the relationship of the Pauline greeting to contemporaneous epistolary literature? Two, what effect does the Pauline greeting create in the context of the letter opening?

First, however, the Pauline greeting itself needs examining in order to establish the standard Pauline opening greeting formula. In all seven of the authentic letters the initial greeting reads, *χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη*. In six of the seven letters that initial greeting is qualified by a genitive of source prepositional phrase, *ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.<sup>19</sup> 1 Thessalonians is the only letter without the prepositional phrase though the dative prepositional phrase which qualifies the recipients and immediately precedes the greeting, 'in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ', may be an early reflection of the greeting formula.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>J.M. Lieu, ' "Grace to You and Peace": The Apostolic Greeting', *BJRL* 68 (1985-86), pp. 161-78.

<sup>19</sup>B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 589, decides against the variant, *ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.

<sup>20</sup>It is possible to read the dative prepositional phrase in 1 Thess. 1.1 with the greeting and not as a modifier of the recipients which would then align all seven Pauline greetings, but this is not the best reading, F.F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, WBC, 45 (Waco: Word Books, 1982), pp. 7-8.



The standard Pauline greeting, then, is, *χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.<sup>21</sup> The standard explanation for the origin of the Pauline greeting suggests that the first word, *χάρις*, is a play on the Greek letter greeting, *χαίρειν*, with *εἰρήνη* being an addition based on the Jewish salutation, *שלום*, (*shalom*).<sup>22</sup> The Pauline greeting, however, can be explained in a different way.

First, with respect to Greek epistolary convention, there are no exact parallels with the Pauline greeting. The greeting formula in Greek letters, as discussed earlier, was consistently, *χαίρειν*. Even extant Jewish letters written in Greek use *χαίρειν*, not a translated Hebrew letter greeting formula.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, for a letter written in Greek, it is very significant that the greeting convention is different.

The assertion that the Pauline greeting, *χάρις*, reflects the Greek greeting formula by being a play on *χαίρειν* is difficult to prove. Though the two words share

---

<sup>21</sup>Galatians is the only letter which extends the greeting by a confession or kerygmatic summary (Gal. 1:4): 'who gave himself for our sins in order to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father'; and by a doxology (Gal. 1:5): 'to whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen'. This exceptional extension may be partly explained by the lack of a thanksgiving or blessing which normally follows the Pauline greeting.

<sup>22</sup>Doty, *Letters*, p. 29; Aune, *New Testament*, p. 184. Lieu, 'The Apostolic Greeting', pp. 167-70, suggests the Jewish *shalom* is the first dimension, with the word 'grace' being the Pauline innovation. E. Lohmeyer, 'Problem paulinischer Theologie I: Briefliche Grussüberschriften', *ZNW* 26 (1927), pp. 158-73, argues that the greeting formula is borrowed from early Christian liturgy; however, G. Friedrich, 'Lohmeyer's These über "Das paulinische Briefpräskript" kritisch beleuchtet', *ThLZ* 81 (1955) 343-46, defends the Pauline origin of the greeting.

<sup>23</sup>See Chapter Two, section 4.

a common root, any semantical relationship is difficult to establish. However, since Paul was undoubtedly aware of the Greek opening formula, and since he appears to be using the Greek opening convention at least in form (X to Y, [a greeting])<sup>23</sup> it is possible that he deliberately used χάρις in order to play on χαίρειν drawing on their common root, χαίρω.

The standard Pauline greeting also possibly reflects Greek convention in one other way. The use of two greeting words parallels some Greek letter greetings. However, the second greeting word in the Greek letter tradition typically was an abbreviated health wish formula, καὶ ἔρρωσθαι, which does not seem to be an aspect of the Pauline use of εἰρήνη.<sup>24</sup> It is possible the Pauline greeting is a Christianizing of this two word Greek opening greeting and not drawing on Jewish epistolary practice. Basically then, the Pauline greeting reflects the Greek greeting convention in form, possibly by the word, χάρις being a play on the word χαίρειν, and possibly by a Christianization of the two word Greek opening greeting.

With regard to the Jewish letter greeting, the matter is more complex. Typically, Paul's use of εἰρήνη is seen as deliberate translation of the Hebrew letter greeting, shalom. Yet, as discussed in chapter two, the simple use of shalom as a letter greeting occurs only in the Bar Kokhba correspondence (135 CE) and probably reflects influence from the Greek letter. A possible parallel is the LXX translation of Ezra 4.17; 5.7 and Dan. 3.31; 6.26.

---

<sup>24</sup>White, Light, p. 200.



These scriptural texts provide Paul with a parallel uses of εἰρήνη, and Dan. 3.31 and 6:25 also use ὑμῖν with εἰρήνη. Interestingly, Jewish religious writings written in Greek and not translated from Hebrew which have imbedded letters use χαίρειν not εἰρήνη (1 Macc. 10.18, 25; 11.30; 12.6; 13.36; 14.20; 15.2, 16; 2 Macc. 9.19; 11:16, 22, 27, 34). A few Jewish letters used two greeting words, but when shalom is combined with another word, it is usually with the word 'mercy'.<sup>25</sup> 2 Macc. 1.1 is a significant Greek parallel in that it uses the formula, 'greeting...good peace'. It appears that even a Jewish reader, especially a Jewish reader bilingual in Greek and Hebrew or Aramaic, would have found the Pauline greeting unconventional.

To summarize so far, the Pauline letter greeting is distinctive in the use of χάρις and the combination of χάρις with εἰρήνη. The personal pronoun designating the recipients of the greeting is absent in the Greek letter convention, but has some parallel in the LXX. The use of a two word greeting has some parallel in Greek and Hebrew letters, but the words and the sense are changed and Christianized in the Pauline letters. The qualifying prepositional phrase, ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, is unparalleled in any epistolary tradition.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>Wisdom 3.9; 4.15; Apoc. Enoch 5.7; Apoc. Bar. 78.2.

<sup>26</sup>There is a possible development from 1 Thess. 1.1 which omits the prepositional phrase, to the subsequent letters which add it. The development appears to be a Pauline addition, so Lieu, 'Apostolic Greeting', p. 169.

What is the effect of this distinctive greeting?

First, the unconventional nature of the greeting would have drawn attention to the greeting especially <sup>to</sup> a Greek speaking reader/hearer, creating an emphasis through novelty.

Second, the words, 'grace and peace', establish a religious content which is emphasized by the qualifying prepositional phrase which invokes the name of God and the distinctively Christian slogan of Jesus Christ as Lord. Third, a personal and communal dimension would have been invoked by the use of the personal plural pronoun.

#### 2.1.4. Summary

The Pauline opening by taking the conventional Greek opening form and modifying it in a number of distinctive ways creates a unique epistolary opening. The letter has an official tone through the titular qualification of the sender and through the communal nature of the addressee. The opening also establishes a communal dimension to the letter by naming a co-sender or co-senders and by using a community addressee. A religious and specifically Christian context is established by the use of Christian words which qualify the sender and recipients and which form the basis for the opening greeting. Theological assertions and assumptions are implicit in the references to Jesus, the use of certain religious concepts like 'called', 'saints', 'servant', 'apostle'; 'church', 'grace', 'peace', 'lord'. There is an implicit authority conveyed in the creative alterations to the epistolary convention, alterations which convey the sender's command over the epistolary situation. All in all, then, the



Pauline modifications to the epistolary conventions in the opening serve to affirm or establish a religious, specifically Christian, relational context for the epistolary situation, to invoke an official tone combined with a mutual or communal aspect to the epistolary situation, and to assert concrete Christian beliefs as the ideological basis for the epistolary situation.

## 2.2. The Thanksgiving

The thanksgiving is one of the innovative epistolary features of the Pauline letters. While part of the Pauline letter opening, its distinctiveness and general length suggest that it be examined on its own. This survey of the Pauline thanksgiving is dependent upon two previous extensive studies of the thanksgiving, P. Schubert's, The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving, published in 1939, and P.T. O'Brien's updating and revision of Schubert, Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul. Both works attempt to compare and contrast the thanksgiving section with Greek and Semitic letter traditions. Both works analyze the function of the thanksgiving for the Pauline letters, but primarily seeking their theological nature. Both works neglect the rhetorical effect of the thanksgiving for the epistolary situation.

Drawing on the work of Schubert and O'Brien, this survey will examine the authentic epistles in order to establish the convention as practised within the Pauline letter tradition and to see how the various individual

letters vary the standard convention.<sup>27</sup> Next the thanksgiving convention will be compared and contrasted to the contemporaneous epistolary traditions. Finally the function and the effect of the thanksgiving epistolary section on the epistolary situation will be explored.

#### 2.2.1. The Form of the Thanksgiving

Establishing the conventional introductory thanksgiving form for the Pauline letters is difficult. Two of the seven authentic Pauline letters do not have a thanksgiving section: Galatians omits it entirely, and 2 Corinthians substitutes a blessing or eulogy for the thanksgiving. 1 Thessalonians presents a special problem because of the debate over the extent or number of thanksgiving sections found in the letter.<sup>28</sup> While a thanksgiving section is a regular feature in five of the seven Pauline letters, the actual form varies from letter to letter.

Schubert isolated two grammatical forms for the introductory thanksgivings by comparing the syntactical

---

<sup>27</sup>Both works include discussions of Colossians, 2 Thessalonians and Ephesians which have been omitted from this study.

<sup>28</sup>The debate is the number of thanksgivings as the thanksgiving form appears three times, 1 Thess. 1.2-10; 2.13-16; 3.9-13. This discussion will only analyze the first thanksgiving section, 1.2-10. For the debate, see Boers, 'Form Critical Study', pp. 140-58; also the relevant sections in Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 24-27; and O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 142-44; I. H. Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, NCB (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983), pp. 6-11.



structures of each of the opening thanksgiving sections.<sup>29</sup> His type 'Ia' begins with the εὐχαριστέω τῷ θεῷ clause or its equivalent, modified by one, two or three nominative masculine participles. The thanksgiving sections were concluded by a final clause introduced by ἵνα, ὅπως or εἰς τό with the infinitive which was subordinate to the participle(s). The final clause in this Ia type has a prospective dimension in the tone of its thanksgiving, giving thanks for what may be. In this sense the thanksgiving has a didactic aspect to it, encouraging the addressees to do what the sender is already giving thanks for. This type is found in the following letters, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.<sup>30</sup>

Schubert's type 'Ib' also begins with the εὐχαριστέω clause, but it is then modified by a causal ὅτι clause. The ὅτι clause has retrospective dimension in the tone of its thanksgiving, in effect, stating the reason or cause for the thanksgiving. This type is found in 1 Corinthians and Romans (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13).

Other studies of the five introductory thanksgivings posit a possible tripartite structure for the thanksgiving section: (1) thanksgiving proper; (2) intercessory prayer or petitionary prayer report; and (3) eschatological

---

<sup>29</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 10-39. O'Brien, Introductory, p. 3, adds a third grammatical category, the mixed; cf. Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 35-36.

<sup>30</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, p. 46, labels 2 Cor. 1.3-7 an 'inverted' form of Ia.

climax.<sup>31</sup> Only Philippians and 1 Thessalonians has all three elements. All five thanksgiving sections have the thanksgiving proper, εὐχαριστέω τῷ θεῷ. Only 1 Thessalonians uses the first-person plural form of the verb instead of the singular; one would expect the plural form in all the letters given the communal nature of the sender.<sup>32</sup> Romans, Philippians and Philemon modify the dative phrase, τῷ θεῷ, with the genitive pronoun, μου, further emphasizing the first-person, which has the effect of personalizing the thanksgiving so that it seems a more intimate exchange, and yet emphasizes the person giving thanks and their spiritual perspective as the controlling perspective. In Romans the writer not only gives thanks to God, but adds an additional prepositional phrase, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Thessalonians go on to designate the persons, always the recipients, for whom the sender(s) gives thanks to God by an adverbial genitive of reference with περὶ; for example, περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, 1 Thess. 1.2, and by an adverbial dative of time in Phil. 1.2, ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνηίᾳ ὑμῶν.

The form of the intercession or petitionary prayer report varies. 1 Corinthians is the only introductory thanksgiving section to omit this element entirely. In the other thanksgivings, there are two features to the petitionary prayer report: (1) a general affirmation of

---

<sup>31</sup>Doty, Letters, pp. 31-33; White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1741-42; cf. Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 4-9. O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 261, 270-71, integrates the eschatological climax into the petitionary prayer or intercession.

<sup>32</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 36-37.



intercession, and (2) a specific intercessory petition. The general affirmation of intercession is introduced, for example, by the phrase, πάντοτε μνείαν σου ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου (Phlm. 4), and its variations (Rom. 1.9; Phil. 1.4; 1 Thess. 1.2). The specific petition is introduced differently in each intercession section, and each one has a different content which is situation specific to each letter.<sup>33</sup>

The third element, the eschatological climax is more a topic or theme than a formulaic feature in the thanksgiving section. There is no consistent verbal formula or other consistent grammatical features employed in this theme element to help isolate it as a formula. Schubert's suggestion that the eschatological climax signals the close of the thanksgiving seems unwarranted as it is not a consistent part of the introductory thanksgiving, only occurring in three of the authentic letters, 1 Cor. 1.8-9; Phil. 1.10-11; 1 Thess. 1.10 (cf. 3.11-13); with 2 Cor. 1.7 as a possible eschatological allusion.<sup>34</sup> Thematically, the

---

<sup>33</sup>Romans 1:10 designates the petition by, δεόμενος εἰ...; Philippians 1:9 by, προσεύχομαι ἵνα...; Philemon 6, uses a ὅπως clause subordinate to the participle, μνείαν σου ποιούμενος, to give the petition. 1 Thessalonians does not have a petition in the introductory thanksgiving, but note 1 Thess. 3:10, δεόμενοι..., which signals the petition for the thanksgiving section, 1 Thess. 3:9-13.

<sup>34</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 4-9. J.T. Sanders, 'The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus', JBL 81 (1962), pp. 348-62, suggests a doxology can also mark the end of the thanksgiving period. J.H. Roberts, 'Transitional Techniques to the Letter Body in the Corpus Paulinum', in A South African Perspective on the New Testament, eds. J.H. Petzer and P.J. Hartin (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), pp. 189-99, suggests a variety of options which close the thanksgiving and open the letter-body.

specific prayer petition for which the sender gives thanks is seen to have a potential benefit for the recipients at the future judgment, hence its eschatological nature. The presence of this 'eschatological climax' may indicate a theme important to the letter-body, or may simply be a means by which the sender elevates and emphasizes the specific item for which thanks is being offered as spiritually significant: it is significant because it has eschatological ramifications.

Part of the epistolary opening of 2 Corinthians, 2 Cor. 1.3-7, requires a brief comment. It opens with blessing formula εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός, instead of the typical thanksgiving formula. The structural form of this paragraph is also distinct from the grammatical forms and the tripartite structure common to the thanksgiving section found in the other letters. Many studies have noticed similarities with the Jewish berakah, though with Christianized elements.<sup>35</sup>

#### 2.2.2. Relationship to Greek and Jewish Epistolary Tradition

Schubert's study included a detailed comparison of the Pauline thanksgiving form with ancient Jewish and Greek literature. He concluded that the Pauline thanksgiving was rooted in the Greek epistolary tradition, and even that Paul wrote as an indigenous Hellenist, not as a Jew who was exposed to Hellenistic influences.<sup>36</sup> J.M. Robinson in an

---

<sup>35</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 233-34; C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), pp. 56-59.

<sup>36</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, p. 184.



important article challenging Schubert's conclusion notes that the hodayah form found in the prayers and hymns of Judaism, with examples from Qumran furnishing the Pauline antecedent, provided a good example of a thanksgiving linked with petition.<sup>37</sup> As a result of Robinson's article and subsequent studies attempting to highlight Semitic parallels for the Pauline thanksgiving section, many commentators have adopted a via media, concluding like O'Brien: 'that the structure of the Pauline thanksgiving periods was Hellenistic while the contents (apart from their specifically Christian elements) showed the influence of Jewish thought'.<sup>38</sup>

The Pauline introductory thanksgiving section has no exact parallel in contemporaneous epistolary literature.<sup>39</sup> As noted earlier, there are Greek letters with a thanksgiving section.<sup>40</sup> These primarily are found in family letters. In the examples Schubert analyzes he notes similar grammatical forms to the Pauline thanksgivings,

---

<sup>37</sup>J.M. Robinson, 'Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Frühchristentums', in Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen, eds. W. Eltester and F.H. Kettler (BZNW 30; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), pp. 194-235. F.O. Francis, 'The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John', ZNW 61 (1970), pp. 110-17, traces the development of the thanksgiving formula from Jewish antecedents through the late Christian epistolary tradition.

<sup>38</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 11; so also White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1741-42; Doty, Letters, p. 33.

<sup>39</sup>p. Arzt, 'The "Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving" in the Papyri and in Paul', NovT 36 (1994), pp. 29-46, but he is unconvincing in concluding that the thanksgiving is not a distinct epistolary element in Pauline letters, but functions only as a prooemium or part of a prooemium.

<sup>40</sup>See Chapter Two, section 3.5.2.1.

especially the *εὐχαριστέω...ὅτι* formula.<sup>41</sup> A hellenistic-Jewish parallel written in Greek, 2 Macc. 1:11-2:18, also provides a significant parallel to the Pauline thanksgiving.<sup>42</sup> The introductory thanksgiving section in the Pauline letters corresponds to the Greek epistolary convention, in the position of the thanksgiving in the letter opening, in the grammatical form, and in the structure of thanksgiving followed by intercession.

But there are significant differences between the Pauline introductory thanksgiving and those found in Greek letters, not least being the length and the grammatical variations.<sup>43</sup> Second, the concern is not for the physical health, but for the spiritual well-being of the recipients. Third, the Greek letter thanksgiving generally focuses on the sender's welfare; the Pauline thanksgiving focuses on the well-being of the recipients. Fourth, the intercession is a subsection *cf. 2:18* of the thanksgiving, a dependent grammatical construction modifying the *εὐχαριστέω* clause, rather than a separate *προσκύνημα* formula. The significance of these differences will be discussed in the following section.

With regard to Jewish letters, there are no real parallels. The *hodayah* parallels which Robinson finds in Jewish prayers and hymns are not found in epistolary literature. In addition, the parlance of these formulas

---

<sup>41</sup>Schubert, *Form and Function*, pp. 158-79.

<sup>42</sup>See the analysis by Schubert, *Form and Function*, pp. 117-19.

<sup>43</sup>White, 'Saint Paul', pp. 438-39.



from Hebrew into Greek may not be as exact as Robinson suggests.<sup>44</sup> Much of the argument for dependence on the hodayah parallels actually depends on a biographical assertion that Paul would first and foremost draw upon his Jewish background. The only Jewish letters which exhibit an opening similar to the Pauline letters are those in Greek which follow Greek epistolary convention.

One can conclude like O'Brien, that the structure of the Pauline thanksgiving period was hellenistic. However, to conclude that the contents was influenced by Jewish thought is more difficult to substantiate. O'Brien primarily bases this on the prayer nature of the thanksgiving. He correctly notes that when the thanksgiving does have a prayer aspect the verbal and thematic parallels with Jewish prayers are significant.<sup>45</sup> Yet, to emphasize the prayer dimension of the thanksgiving focuses on the wrong relational dimension of the epistolary situation. The thanksgivings are not prayers to God, at least in the form in which they appear in the letter, but an epistolary convention conveyed to the recipients. This brings the discussion to the function of these thanksgiving sections.

---

<sup>44</sup>For instance 1 Esdras 5:58 uses ὁμολογέω, not εὐχαριστέω. See the discussion in Robinson, 'Die Hodajot-Formel', pp. 194-201; O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 236-39.

<sup>45</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 9-13. See also the analysis of the 'prayers' in the Pauline thanksgivings in G.P. Wiles, Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul, SNTSMS, 24 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 175-229.

### 2.2.3. The Function of the Thanksgiving

Schubert's work on the form and function of the Pauline thanksgivings noted the similarities between the form of the Pauline thanksgivings and the thanksgiving expressions found in the opening of the Greek letter. He concluded from this similarity that the function of the Pauline thanksgiving was the same as those found in the Greek epistolary tradition: 'to indicate the occasion for and the contents of the letters which they introduce'.<sup>46</sup> More recent research has expanded this conclusion concerning the epistolary function of the thanksgiving section. O'Brien gives three other functions for the thanksgiving: (1) an expression of pastoral and apostolic concern for the recipients; (2) a didactic function, instructing the recipients by recalling previous teaching or by introducing new guidance on matters of importance to the addressees; (3) a paraenetic purpose, introducing a theme in the intercession thereby conveying the importance of it which is then followed up in the body with more detailed instruction.<sup>47</sup> Alternatively, Robinson has suggested a possible liturgical function whereby the thanksgiving expressions draw on early Christian liturgical tradition and practice in order to establish or fit into a liturgical context when the letter was originally read to the recipients.<sup>48</sup> In addition, some analyses suggest the

---

<sup>46</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 12-15, 261-63.

<sup>48</sup>J.M. Robinson, 'The Historicality of Biblical Language', in The Old Testament and Christian Faith, ed. B.W. Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 132-49.



thanksgiving functions rhetorically like an exordium in a speech, introducing themes and gaining the favour of the audience.<sup>49</sup>

The function of the thanksgiving emerges from two factors: one, its comparison and contrast with the health-wish convention in Greek letter tradition; and two, its integral relationship to the letter as a literary whole. It has already been noted that the Pauline thanksgiving has structural and grammatical similarities with the opening health-wish and the expressions of thanksgiving and intercession found in the Greek family letters. As noted earlier, these epistolary conventions served primarily to maintain contact and perpetuate the ongoing friendly relationship between the sender(s) and the recipient(s). Paul then draws on this epistolary convention to do likewise, though with a creative turn.

Though the addressee is always the featured party in the opening conventions from the opening greeting onwards,

---

Rigaux, Letters of Paul, p. 121-22, suggests the thanksgiving is a reflection of Paul's preaching style based on his Jewish heritage, but he offers no way to prove this idea.

<sup>49</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 186; Kennedy, New Testament, p. 24. Schnider and Stenger, Studien, p. 51, suggest the thanksgiving is like a rhetorical captatio benevolentiae, praising the recipients; and, pp. 50-68, they also suggest another consistent Pauline feature, the 'self-recommendation' (Selbstempfehlung) which follows the thanksgiving, but what they have combined is the introductory formula with autobiographical assertions to create a rhetorical theme in order to assert the sender's authority and state the reason for writing. More accurately, see the analysis of the epistolary introductory formulae for the opening of the letter-body suggested by, J.L. White, 'Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter', JBL 90 (1971), pp. 91-97; and Mullins, 'Petition', pp. 46-54; idem, 'Disclosure', pp. 44-50; idem, 'Formulas', pp. 380-90.

the Pauline thanksgiving section heightens the focus on the recipients, exaggerating the familial concern. The concern expressed in the Pauline thanksgiving is exclusively on the spiritual well-being of the recipients and their positive spiritual performance. The lack of mention regarding the sender's welfare, a common opening topos in Greek family letters, suggests either a curious humility--'I'm not really important, you are!'; or an authoritative dismissal--'Never mind me, it is you who are the real concern'. O'Brien labels this aspect of the thanksgiving as evidence of deep pastoral and apostolic concern.<sup>50</sup>

The Pauline thanksgiving has another distinction, the dominance of the thanksgiving tone.<sup>51</sup> The εὐχαριστέω formula as the dominant verb subsumes even the intercession which was normally an independent clause or formula in Greek letters. The Pauline formula changes the emphasis from supplication to God to thanksgiving to God. This emphasis on thanksgiving sets an interesting tone. On the one hand, it establishes or reconfirms the positive relationship between the sender and the addressees. It also explicates the expectations of the sender regarding the recipients with respect to their future relationship by subtly suggesting what they should strive for spiritually in order to maintain this 'thanksgiving' praise from the sender. This aspect is related to the paraenetic function

---

<sup>50</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup>Robinson, 'Die Hodajot-Formel', pp. 201-13, notes the preference in primitive Christianity for the formula of thanksgiving over the Jewish blessing formula.



noted for the thanksgivings.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the explicit emphasis on the sender giving thanks (or in the case of Galatians, omitting the thanksgiving) emphasizes the sender's authoritative role: he gives the praise, and he selects and names the acceptable spiritual qualities in the recipients.

The thanksgiving also has a familial relational tone. As one examines the words and phrases used in the Pauline thanksgivings, the relational dimension stands out as a prominent dimension. Schubert notes this relational aspect through the interchange between first and second person:

When we collect and classify the endings of the finite verb forms and the personal pronouns occurring in the thanksgivings, it becomes impressively obvious that the rhythmical interchange between the first and second persons is a structurally basic and characteristic element of the thanksgiving pattern.<sup>53</sup>

In other words, the thanksgiving structure is characterized by a basic bipolarity, a double focus around which all thoughts center: the relationship between the addressant and the addressee.<sup>54</sup>

Yet on the other hand, the thanksgiving is not purely relational in tone. The Pauline thanksgivings break convention by concentrating on the spiritual welfare rather than the physical welfare. That spirituality is proffered in clear Christian terms as opposed to the pagan religious

---

<sup>52</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 58, 89; O'Brien, Introductory, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup>Schubert, Form and Function, p. 37.

<sup>54</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 186, suggests the longer the thanksgiving, the more intimate or cordial the relationship between the letter parties; cf. Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 183-84.

expressions often found in these opening conventions in Greek private letters. The sender thereby both affirms and encourages the possible new spiritual tradition of the recipients,<sup>55</sup> and affirms and encourages the spiritual tradition which is the relational basis for the epistolary situation. This aspect is related to the didactic function O'Brien identifies in the thanksgiving section.<sup>56</sup> By focusing primarily on the recipient at the exclusion of the sender's welfare, by establishing a thanksgiving perspective instead of a supplication perspective, by concentrating on the spiritual welfare as opposed to the physical welfare, the Pauline thanksgiving creates a curious mix of mutuality and authority.

By examining the relationship of the thanksgiving section to the rest of the letter, several other functional qualities emerge. The detailed study of O'Brien has shown a direct relationship with the themes introduced in the introductory thanksgivings and the themes found in the body of the letter, confirming Schubert's suggestion that the thanksgiving convention has a distinct epistolary function.<sup>57</sup> By contextualizing these themes in a context of intercessory or petitionary prayer reports, they are given special spiritual significance. The sender implies that the themes have a divine sanction, and are not his authoritative endorsement alone. This contextualization

---

<sup>55</sup>In the thanksgiving, 1 Thess. 1.2-10, this is made explicit, 'how you turned to God from idols to serve the true and living God', 1 Thess. 1.9b.

<sup>56</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 13-14.

<sup>57</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 15, *passim*.



plays on the spiritual tone already being established in the address and greeting.

All in all the introductory thanksgiving section in the Pauline epistles functions in several ways. By drawing on fixed convention but by distinctively altering it, the sender draws attention to the thanksgiving in terms of its epistolary form. In drawing attention to the thanksgiving, the sender is able to utilize convention to accomplish a new end. Not only does the thanksgiving maintain the friendly relationship between the sender and the recipients, as do most ancient opening letter conventions, but that relationship is recast, furthered, and established under the spiritual terms set out in the thanksgiving. And it is in those terms that the rest of the letter is to be read, received and acted upon.

### 2.3. Letter Closing

The letter closing is the final major section in the Pauline letter structure.<sup>58</sup> Recent studies on the ancient Greek letters have generally concluded that the letter closing's primary function is to maintain the relationship between the sender and the recipients.<sup>59</sup> Usually preceding the letter closing, the letter-body closed finalizing or summing up the letter message or purpose. Often the

---

<sup>58</sup>On the Pauline closing, Doty, Letters, pp. 39-42; Aune, New Testament, pp. 186-188; Schnider and Stenger, Studien, pp. 108-67; Roetzel, Letters of Paul, pp. 36-39; H. Gamble, The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism, Studies and Documents, 42 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 65-83; and now Weima, Pauline Letter Closings.

<sup>59</sup>White, Light, p. 198; Koskeniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 148-54.

letter-body closed with a reference to the future.<sup>60</sup> This turn toward the future of the relationship between the sender and recipients is a natural bridge into the letter closing. The letter closing contains a definite tone or atmosphere shift. The letter has finished the business aspect and moves into a more personal, relational perspective, a philophronetic function. But one must be careful not to focus so tightly on the philophronetic aspect of the letter closing and lose sight of the letter closing's relationship to the purpose or the business of the letter. Furthermore, the alterations or adaptations of the Pauline letter closing conventions may reveal telling hints of the letter's purpose, however unrelated they might seem to the stated purpose in the letter-body. In the atmosphere of congenial closing greetings and the final farewell, the reader is confronted with a text which seeks to shape the reader's understanding of the letter message and the epistolary situation.

In this discussion of the Pauline letter, several issues will be examined. First, the structure of the closing will be assessed in terms of its regular pattern across the seven epistles. Next, the greetings which form a fairly consistent part of the closing will be examined. Third, the closing benediction which ends all the Pauline letters will be studied. Finally, other 'optional' closing conventions will be looked at to see how they function in the letter closing. Once again, the survey seeks to determine not only the form, but also the function and the

---

<sup>60</sup>White, Light, p. 202.



effect of the closing conventions upon the epistolary situation.

### 2.3.1. Structure of the Letter Closing

The letter closing of the Pauline epistles have not been extensively analyzed. The work of R. Funk set the pattern for most studies. Funk, following P. Wendland, noted three parts to the closing: (1) doxology, (2) greetings, and (3) benediction.<sup>61</sup> J.L. White rightly notes that the doxology is only a feature of Romans and Philippians, and in disputed texts, and thus should not be included as an essential part of the closing.<sup>62</sup> This leaves the greetings and benediction. Greetings are absent in Galatians, and 1 Thessalonians only contains a single greeting formula, the holy kiss formula. So while the greetings are not required their absence in only one of the seven epistles suggests a key role in the closing. W. Doty's analysis of the Pauline letter closing suggesting that the closing benediction often supplemented with other closing conventions is the norm, may be the most correct structural analysis.<sup>63</sup>

G.P. Wiles suggests a possible nine features for the Pauline letter closing from a tabulation of the seven authentic epistles: (1) admonition to constant rejoicing,

---

<sup>61</sup>Funk, Language, p. 257.

<sup>62</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', p. 1740. Doty, Letters, pp. 39-40, suggests the closing benediction functions like a doxology, but provides only one letter-closing example from the Pauline letters.

<sup>63</sup>Doty, Letters, pp. 39-42; also Aune, New Testament, p. 186.

prayer, thanksgiving; (2) summarizing wish-prayer; (3) reference to collection or gift; (4) request for reader's prayers; (5) peace blessing; (6) greetings; (7) holy kiss; (8) stern warning; and (9) grace blessing.<sup>64</sup> It is questionable whether all nine are actually epistolary elements found in the letter closing, but instead are part of the letter-body closing, especially items one through four. Since none of the Pauline epistles use all nine, the significance is in the combination and relationship of the various features to each other and in the way the combined features function in relation to the letter purpose.

H. Gamble's survey of the Pauline letter closing elements suggests the following structure: (1) hortatory remarks, (2) peace wish, (3) greetings, (3a) kiss greeting, (4) grace-benediction.<sup>65</sup> Item one is not a formulaic element, and it is probably better related to the body-closing. Gamble's structure is an 'ideal' based on the frequency of each item: item two, five letters; item three, six letters; item three-a, four letters; item four, seven letters. Only 2 Corinthians and possibly Romans has all the closing elements in his structure.

A much more extensive closing is suggested by C. Roetzel.<sup>66</sup> He notes that the closing is usually signalled by a cluster of brief instructions, the same as Gamble's hortatory remarks. His study suggests the closing begins

---

<sup>64</sup>Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 301-02.

<sup>65</sup>Gamble, Textual, pp. 82-83.

<sup>66</sup>Roetzel, Letters of Paul, pp. 36-39; idem, '1 Thessalonians 5.12-28: A Case Study', SBLSP 108 (1972), pp. 2:367-83.



with a peace wish which is sometimes combined with a request for prayer. Second, <sup>ave</sup>~~we~~ the extended greetings, then the holy kiss formula, and fourthly the final benediction. The benediction is sometimes preceded by an apostolic command. His analysis posits four main elements plus two supplementary features.

The strength of Roetzel's study is that it isolates several concluding elements or devices that are used in the Pauline letter closing. His suggestion of a bridge or transition to the closing by a cluster of instruction which is frequently followed by a peace wish is insightful with regard to the body-closing and its relationship to the letter closing. However, the weakness of his proposal is that only 2 Corinthians has all four of his main closing elements; Romans possibly has them all but he doubts the authenticity of Romans chapter 16 which contain the greetings, holy kiss formula and grace benediction.<sup>67</sup> So rather than adopt Roetzel's archetypal structure for the closing, the simple structure suggested by Doty will be followed with the other closing elements Roetzel isolated being examined as optional closing conventions.

### 2.3.2. Greetings

The closing convention of conveying greetings to the recipient(s) either from the sender or from a third party or to a fourth party are well documented in papyri

---

<sup>67</sup>Roetzel, Letters of Paul, p. 69; cf. Gamble, Textual, pp. 84-95, who argues for the authenticity of Romans chapter 16.

letters.<sup>68</sup> All but Galatians have a greeting formula in the Pauline letter closing. The most extensive analysis of the greeting formula is by T. Mullins.<sup>69</sup> After examining a number of examples, he concludes that the basic greeting formula has three elements with a fourth optional element: (1) the greeting verb, ἀσπάζεσθαι; (2) indication of the greeter; (3) indication of the person(s) greeted; (4) (optional) elaborating phrases.<sup>70</sup> In his survey, he notes three different types of this basic greeting formula.<sup>71</sup> In the first type, a first-person greeting, the sender greets the recipient or another party directly, for example: ἀσπάζομαι πολλὰ τὰ ἀδελφία (I greet my brothers much).<sup>72</sup> In the second type, a second-person greeting, the sender asks the addressee to greet someone for him, for example, ἀσπάζου τοὺς σοὺς πάντας (Greet all your people).<sup>73</sup> The third type, a third-person greeting, the writer relays greetings from a third party to the addressee or to a fourth party, for example, ἀσπάζεταισε Ἀθηναροῦς καὶ τὰ παιδία τὰ λοιπὰ (Athenarous and the rest of the children salute you).<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup>Exler, Form, pp. 115-16; White, Light, p. 202.

<sup>69</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', pp. 418-26.

<sup>70</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', pp. 418-19.

<sup>71</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', p. 418. While he provides examples in his article, all the examples in this study are taken from White, Light.

<sup>72</sup>Example, White, Light, letter 104a.

<sup>73</sup>Example, White, Light, letter 67.

<sup>74</sup>Example, White, Light, letter 107.



The most common greeting form, found twenty times in the Pauline letters, is the second type, usually with the imperative, ἀσπασασθε; for example, ἀσπασασθε Ἡρωδίωνα τὸν συγγενὴ μου, Rom. 16.11. But this observation based on numbers alone is a distortion because sixteen uses are in Romans with one being the holy kiss greeting. Three other examples outside Romans are holy kiss greetings (1 Cor. 16.20; 2 Cor. 1.12; 1 Thess. 5.26); with only one other occurrence in Phil. 4.21: ἀσπασασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The only example of the first type of greeting formula is Rom. 16:22 which is not even a Pauline greeting, but a first-person greeting from the scribe of the letter. The third type of greeting formula is used ten times, always a third party greeting the addressees, for example, ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, Phil. 4.22. These third-person greetings from a third party, with the exception of Romans, is the dominant Pauline greeting convention in the letter closing.

The Pauline greetings have several distinctive features. Two greetings are Christianized: 1 Cor. 16.19, ἀσπάζεται...ἐν κυρίῳ; Phil. 4.21, ἀσπασασθε...ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. In addition, the Pauline greetings contain numerous elaborating phrases which qualify the third party sending greetings, qualifying phrases not found in the typical Greek family letters.<sup>75</sup> In most cases they are personal descriptions which have Christian overtones (τοὺς συνεργούς μου, Rom. 16.3, 9, 21; Phlm. 24; ὁ συναιχμάλωτός

---

<sup>75</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', pp. 422-23, provides a sampling of elaborating phrases used in Greek letter greetings, usually familial terms.

μου, Phlm. 23), or euphemisms for fellow Christians (ἅγιοι, ἀδελφοί, ἐκκλησία).

One of the most unusual Pauline features in the closing greetings is the holy kiss greeting-formula. It is clearly a greeting formula, but has importance in its own right which will be examined below.<sup>76</sup>

The Pauline greetings present a vast network of different parties exchanging greetings, with the number of parties mentioned in Romans 16 being very exceptional in comparison with the number found in any papyri letters. Individuals greet the recipients (1 Cor. 16.19; Rom. 16.21-23; Phlm. 23); specific groups greet the recipients (Phil. 4.21-22; 1 Cor. 16.19); and undefined Christian groups-- 'all the brothers', 'all the saints', 'all the churches in Asia', 'all the churches in Christ'--greet the recipients (Phil. 4.21; 2 Cor. 13.13; 1 Cor. 16.19-20; Rom. 16.16). In all these third-person type greetings, Paul, as the letter writer, acts as the agent between all these parties. As Mullins notes with regard to third-person greetings, they extend the dialogue beyond the epistolary situation between the sender and addressees.<sup>77</sup>

The lack of first-person and second-person greetings in most of the Pauline letters suggests the textual absence of the sender except as the hidden agent conveying the

---

<sup>76</sup>See section 2.3.4.2. As a greeting formula versus a liturgical formula, see Gamble, Textual, pp. 75-76.

<sup>77</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', pp. 421-22.



extended greetings.<sup>78</sup> Mullins suggests there is an innate humility in the predominance of third-party greetings, but he does not explain how.<sup>79</sup> But almost the opposite effect is evident. By acting as the agent between the various groups who are outside the immediate epistolary situation, the sender stands above all the parties, constructing, or establishing, or enhancing--or whatever--through the textual convention relationships between all the different parties. In addition, by extending the epistolary situation, these third-parties become an extended network implicitly endorsing the letter's obligation upon the recipients, but only as the sender allows by the decision to insert their greeting in the letter. As Gamble comments, 'These comprehensive greetings not only provide an insight into Paul's conception of his apostolic status, but show that he conceived of his letters as serving, among other things, the unity and fellowship of the whole church'.<sup>80</sup>

This evidence of textual power reinforces the communal dimension of the letter constructed in the opening. The Pauline closing greetings are a cordial means to impose a

---

<sup>78</sup>The effect of the large number of second-person greetings in Romans 16 is probably related to the sender's desire to stress personal ties to a community he has never visited, so E. Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, trans. by G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 412. Considering the communal nature of the epistolary situation these second-person greetings also have the effect of singling out individuals from the community, but it may be that these second-person greetings act as first-person greetings from the sender.

<sup>79</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', p. 424.

<sup>80</sup>Gamble, Textual, p. 75.

community perspective. 2 Corinthians, one of the simplest greeting exchanges works to create a large esprit de corps: 'Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints send their greetings' (13.12-13). Here the letter recipients as a community are commanded to extend greetings to one another, and are placed in a community network through the greetings sent by another community to the addressees. Rom. 16:16 is perhaps most emphatic in establishing a community perspective by the greetings: 'Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings'. The exact extent of this collective, 'all the churches of Christ', is nebulous and ambiguous, but its implication of a unified community which has as its focus the letter writer who acts as the facilitator for this community network is overt.

Certainly the greetings help maintain contact and are philophronetic as in Greek family letters. Yet there is something more happening in the Pauline greeting convention. The Christianizing of the greetings, the general textual-absence of the sender as a greeter (except in Romans), the interplay between the writer, the community addressed, and the third-parties who send greetings; all this implies an interesting use of epistolary convention which textually constructs a community perspective among the recipients and which connects the recipients to a larger inter-community network as the basis for the epistolary situation.



### 2.3.3. Closing Benediction

As discussed earlier, the Greek letters in general closed with a single word of farewell, usually ἔρρωσο. The Pauline epistles replace this with a 'grace', χάρις, benediction. In five of the seven letters the benediction comes last; where it is not last as in Romans and 1 Corinthians, what follows is like a post-script. The Pauline closing-greeting formula varies slightly from letter to letter ranging from the briefest form in 1 Cor. 16:23, ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν, to the longest form in 2 Cor. 13:13, ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. But despite the variations, the form seems stereotypical with four basic parts: (1) the word 'grace', (2) the divine source statement, always the genitive referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, though 1 Cor. 16.23 omits 'Christ'; and sometimes the qualifier, ἡμῶν, is added, Gal. 6.18; 1 Thess. 5.28; Rom. 16.24, (3) the elided verb, 'to be', and (4) the object or the designated recipients of the grace, always stated by the preposition, μετὰ, followed by a second person plural pronoun. The recipients are designated either simply by the second person pronoun alone, 1 Cor. 16.23; 1 Thess. 5.28; or by πάντων ὑμῶν, 2 Cor. 13.13; Rom. 16.24b; or by τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, Gal. 6.18; Phil. 4.23; Phlm. 25.

The significance of the Pauline variation on the typical Greek epistolary farewell is manifold. First, the writer concludes with an invocation of grace in the same way as he began the letter in the opening salutation making

a symmetrical closing. It is conjecture to say that the benediction serves a liturgical function, especially when combined with the holy kiss formula.<sup>81</sup> The epistolary function is clearer, it is a 'wish-prayer' which confers a religious blessing, in the same way as the *ἐρωσσο* acted as a 'health-wish'.<sup>82</sup> Even if the grace benediction is an adaptation from early Christian worship practice, its implementation as an epistolary farewell would have been dramatic. Second, it serves to remind the readers of the religious context for the epistolary situation as established in the opening. Third, as with the words of greeting in the opening, this benedictory farewell is self-consciously emphatic by its deviation from the epistolary norm. The words would have surprised the Greek readers/hearers creating a Christianized farewell.

#### 2.3.4. Other Closing Conventions

The Pauline epistles combine a number of elements in the closing. The two main features found in the letter closing, the greetings and the grace benediction, have been examined. In this section, several of the 'optional' Pauline epistolary conventions used in relation to the letter closing are examined: the peace-wish, the holy-kiss greeting, the apostolic command, and the signature statement.

---

<sup>81</sup>Wiles, Intercessory, p. 114.

<sup>82</sup>Gamble, Textual, pp. 66-67.



## 2.3.4.1. Peace Wish

The peace wish is found in five of the Pauline letters, the exceptions being 1 Corinthians and Philemon (Rom. 15.33, 16.20a; 2 Cor. 13.11b; Gal. 6.16; Phil. 4.7, 9b; 1 Thess. 5.23). The wish seems formulaic. Gamble suggests five formulaic elements: (1) introductory particle,  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  or  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ , or  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ , (2) subject,  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  and/or  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ , (3) modifiers, a genitive phrase and/or participial clause, (4) wish verb, optative or future indicative, and occasionally (5) purpose clause using  $\dot{\iota}\nu\alpha$  or  $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\varsigma$ .<sup>83</sup> However, these elements are not presented in a consistent clausal structure; compare:

Phil. 4.9b:  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{o}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma\ \epsilon\dot{\iota}\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\iota\ \mu\epsilon\theta'\ \upsilon\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$

2 Thess. 3.16:  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \acute{o}\ \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma\ \epsilon\dot{\iota}\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\omega}\eta\ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu\ \tau\acute{\eta}\nu\ \epsilon\dot{\iota}\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta\eta\ \delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\ \tau\rho\acute{o}\pi\omega$

In addition the qualifications that are often added which are not part of the elements of the formula suggest the 'formula' is adapted to its immediate context (especially in Gal. 6.16 and 1 Thess. 5.23; cf. Rom. 16.20a). The evidence suggests that some kind of formula is in place, but that it is very adaptable.<sup>84</sup>

It seems doubtful that the peace wish corresponds to the Semitic letter closing, 'Be well' ( $\text{וְיָשָׁר וְיָשָׁר}$ ).<sup>85</sup> The grace benediction would be the corresponding closing in

<sup>83</sup>Gamble, Textual, p. 70.

<sup>84</sup>Roetzel, Letters of Paul, p. 37, suggests that since the peace-wish always precedes the grace-benediction, there is a possible chiastic effect with the opening greeting: opening--grace and peace; closing--peace and grace.

<sup>85</sup>Contra Roetzel, Letters of Paul, p. 37; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 111-12.

the Pauline letters. However, the peace wish may draw on the sense of the Jewish shalom expression. Equally, it may reflect an adaptation of the Greek letter closing health-wish, 'And take care of yourself, that you be healthy'.<sup>86</sup> The word 'peace' then would draw upon the idea of well-being in both the shalom greeting and the Greek health-wish. Whatever the tradition-history behind the formula, it inscribes a meeting point in the letter between sender, recipient, and the divine presence. The peace wish really is very similar to the grace benediction and functions in a similar epistolary function.

The question is whether it is really a letter closing element. In Phil. 4.9b it closes a paraenetic section before the final topic of the letter-body, with the letter-body closing with a doxology immediately before the letter closing proper begins with greetings. In 2 Cor. 13.11, it closes the letter-body in conjunction with a λοιπός transition formula. The closing of 1 Thessalonians is complex, but 1 Thess. 5.23 seems best read as a letter-body closing with v. 25 initiating the letter closing. Only in Galatians and Romans is it possibly an element in the letter closing though both these letters end in a complex epistolary closing. It seems the peace wish is a formulaic expression which is part of the section which either ends the letter-body or begins the letter-closing.

1282

1283

1284

---

<sup>86</sup>See Chapter Two, section 3.5.2.3.



2.3.4.2. Holy Kiss Formula<sup>87</sup>

Four of the Pauline letter closings contain a greeting formula which enjoins the community to greet one another with a holy kiss, ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ, (Rom. 16.16a; 1 Cor. 16.20b; 2 Cor. 13.12; 1 Thess. 5.26). This holy kiss formula with the use of the verb, ἀσπάζεσθαι, is a greeting formula and is thus a part of the closing greetings which are a regular feature of the Pauline letter closing.<sup>88</sup> The holy kiss greeting is the only greeting in 1 Thess. 5.26; it precedes the extended greeting in 2 Corinthians; it follows the closing greetings in 1 Corinthians; and it concludes the second-person greetings which come before the third-person greetings in Romans.

It appears to be a distinctly Christian letter convention, and one can only speculate about its origin.<sup>89</sup> Those who interpret the greeting as an injunction for a liturgical setting when the letter was read at a eucharistic setting are probably unduly influenced by the early church's tendency to liturgize the scriptural injunctions (Justin, Apology 65.2; Tertullian, On Prayer

---

<sup>87</sup>The literature is not vast, W. Klassen, 'The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament: An Example of Social Boundry Lines', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 122-35; S. Benko, 'The Kiss', in Pagan Rome and the Early Christians (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 79-102; Gamble, Textual, pp. 75-76; K.M. Hofmann, Philema Hagion (Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 2,38; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1938).

<sup>88</sup>Mullins, 'Greeting', p. 426.

<sup>89</sup>E. Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977 reprint), pp. 245-46, lists the options for its possible origins.

14).<sup>90</sup> Even if the holy kiss formula does draw on some ceremonial or worship act in the early church, its epistolary context and function as a greeting would have been an innovation and probably would have elicited surprise, as with the grace benediction replacing the typical Greek letter farewell.

When the holy kiss formula is used in a Pauline letter, it serves to reinforce the envisioned spiritual context for the relationship between the sender and recipients which the letter opening initiates. The holy kiss formula may be a substitute for the first-person closing greeting of the sender to the recipients, in this case the sender asks (or commands) the whole community to act out the sender's greeting: 'greet one another with a holy kiss ["on my behalf"]'. In addition, its effect would have been to stimulate via a textual command a community expression through a Christianized act.<sup>91</sup> Exchanging a kiss is a common Greco-Roman greeting, but it is made holy and Christian in the Pauline injunction. The text exerts power in its attempt to create or reinforce a relational reality of unity and affection among the community of the addressees by compelling an action.

---

<sup>90</sup>G. Bornkamm, Early Christian Experience (London: SCM, 1969), pp. 169-76; J.A.T. Robinson, 'Traces of a Liturgical Sequence in 1 Cor. 16.20-24', JTS n.s. 4 (1953), pp. 38-41.

<sup>91</sup>Klassen, 'Sacred Kiss', p. 135; Gamble, Textual, p. 76, 'it is possible to think of the exchange of the kiss as a concrete actualization of the greetings given in the letter, as a sign of fellowship within the community, of the community with the Apostle, and indeed of one community with others'.



## 2.3.4.3. Apostolic Command

Several of the letter closings include a stern warning or apostolic command before the benediction (Rom. 16.17-20a; 1 Cor. 16.22; Gal. 6.17; 1 Thess. 5.27; cf. 2 Cor. 13.5 and Phlm 22). These are interesting interjections into the philophronetic tone of the letter closing. They are powerful and authoritative imperatives reflecting the full 'apostolic' authority of the sender as suggested by the title, 'apostle', enjoined to the sender's name in the opening address.

The position of the commands in relation to the letter closing varies. 1 Cor. 16.22 and 1 Thess. 5.27 are clearly part of the letter closing; and their placement after the greeting(s) and before the grace benediction is a stern, even harsh, insertion into the philophronetic tone of the letter closing. Gal. 6.17 and Rom. 16.17-20a are not as straightforward and may be part of the letter-body closing.

The content of each command(s) varies also: 1 Cor. 16.22 is a curse; 1 Thess. 5.17 is a command to read the letter; Gal. 6.17 is a warning and rebuke; Rom. 16.17-20 is a command to avoid those who cause division. Their placement in or near the letter closing makes them highly dramatic; and one suspects they are clues to the epistolary purpose, possibly a summary statement--compare for instance Gal. 1.6-11 and Gal. 6.17. The authoritative tone of these injunctions only adds to the underlying authoritative nature of the other Pauline closing conventions, an aspect which seems to be primarily a product of the writer's manipulation of the closing conventions.

## 2.3.4.4. Signature Statement

Three of the seven letters contain a personal signature statement (1 Cor. 16.21; Gal. 6.11; Phlm. 19; cf. 2 Thess. 3.17 and Col. 4.18):

1 Cor. 16.21: ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου

Gal. 6.11: ἴδετε πηλικοίς ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ  
χειρὶ

Phlm. 19: ἐγὼ Παῦλος ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ

1 Cor. 16.21 is in the letter closing, immediately after the greetings; in Phlm. 19 and Gal. 6.11 it is still in the letter-body closing. These autograph statements most likely reflect the Greek letter convention of the sender adding a few words in his own hand to letters written by a scribe or secretary. In this sense it is more than authenticating the sender's identity and different from the legal function of the illiteracy formula.<sup>92</sup>

G. Bahr suggests these signature statements are a part of the practice of adding subscriptions to letters in which the sender summarizes the salient points of the letter to insure his perspective on the letter purpose or message is clearly stated.<sup>93</sup> While Bahr's analysis is suggestive, in his proposal all the letter closing conventions would be written by the sender, but this would be very irregular as these conventions were generally written by the scribe or amanuensis in Greek letters even where autographs

---

<sup>92</sup>Richards, Secretary, pp. 172-75; Schnider and Stenger, Studien, pp. 135-67, who emphasize the authoritative role of the signature statement. On the illiteracy formula, see Chapter Two, section 3.5.2.3. Compare the letters of Cicero, To Atticus, 12.32; 13.28; 14.21, for a similar type autograph insertion.

<sup>93</sup>Bahr, 'Subscriptions', pp. 27-41.



signatures are included.<sup>94</sup> Examining the supposed Pauline subscriptions which Bahr suggests, not all of them contain the kind of summary of the letter message as Bahr suggests. Since the signature statement is used only once in the letter closing (1 Cor. 16.21), the extensive closing subscription Bahr suggests is improbable as a routine element of the Pauline letter closing. However, though there may not be evidence of subscriptions in Pauline closings as Bahr suggests, it is possible a signature or autographic conclusion is a feature of each Pauline letter with only three letters actually stating such.<sup>95</sup>

Most likely, these Pauline signature statements have a traditional epistolary function of conveying an intimate greeting-expression which is adapted to each letter message/purpose. In 1 Corinthians it is a personal greeting; in Galatians it authoritatively underscores the letter message; in Philemon it acts as a legal signature regarding the obligation with respect to Onesimus' care. In all three instances, it is added to convey a very personal greeting, a tangible reminder of the sender's regards. As a greeting it has a friendly purpose. Given the communal nature of the Pauline letters, however, it also has an authoritative function, singling out one sender as the primary sender. This authoritative note of the autograph is underscored in two instances with apostolic

---

<sup>94</sup>See Chapter Two, section 3.5.2.3. For a full critique of Bahr's theory based on epistolary practice, see Richards, Secretary, pp. 175-79.

<sup>95</sup>So Gamble, Textual, pp. 76-77, based on the evidence of 2 Thess. 3.17.

commands (Gal. 6.17; 1 Cor. 16.22).<sup>96</sup> The signature statement written in the sender's own hand becomes a forceful assertion that the sender stands behind the letter's message and that it is his message.<sup>97</sup>

### 2.3.5. Summary

In sum, the letter closing, while philophronetic, serves a definite function of underscoring the letter purpose. The Pauline letters are particularly adept at this underscoring through the adaptation and manipulation of the Greek epistolary closing conventions and through the combination of the various closing conventions used in the seven letters. The grace benediction as the farewell is a symmetrical closing to the religious context established in the letter opening. In the Pauline letters, the greetings become a way of extending the epistolary situation and fostering extended relationships among the Pauline churches. Authoritative underscoring of the letter message seems inherent in the use of the personal signature and the apostolic command, when used. Other closing conventions like the peace wish and holy kiss formula, when used, work to create a vision of community; and the imperative tone behind them implicitly create an obligation on the addressees' part to the sender. So while the closing conventions maintain contact as in Greek letters, they also inscribe the kind of relationship the letter message and

---

<sup>96</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1740-41, '...Paul intended his signature to convey his apostolic authority, as well as his friendship'.

<sup>97</sup>Richards, Secretary, p. 175.



the letter conventions seek to establish between the sender and the addressees. It is the tension between mutuality and authority implicit in these Pauline closing conventions which allow them to walk the tight rope between a philophronetic purpose and imposing an apostolic perspective on the epistolary situation.

### 3. The Epistolary Situation and the Communication Dynamics of the Pauline Letter

In the following discussion, the Pauline letters will be examined in order to see how the distinctive Pauline epistolary opening and closing conventions inscribe a particular epistolary situation which becomes the social context for the Pauline letters. Secondly, the communication dynamics of the Pauline letters will be explored especially in terms of their orality and their rhetorical nature.

#### 3.1. The Epistolary Situation for the Pauline Letters

The Greek epistolary tradition often signalled the epistolary situation by the kinds of conventions used in the letter opening and closing. As noted in chapter two, most Greek letters functioned in the social context of the Greco-Roman society whether in the realm of the hierarchial ordered society of the client/patron or the official diplomatic communication, or of friendship among equals, or of the household. Personal letters addressed to friends and family used the opening and closing as a means to maintain contact employing multiple opening and closing formulas that were personalized and embellished to create a friendly and intimate epistolary situation. Official

letters used very simple and very stereotypical opening and closing conventions which clearly signalled the relational hierarchy for the epistolary situation.

Both in form and in the kinds of epistolary elements employed the Pauline letters reflect the Greek epistolary practice. Yet, it becomes evident in the way the opening and closing conventions are adapted that the Pauline letters are distinctive, functioning in a different social context from the typical Greek epistolary literature.<sup>98</sup> In essence the distinctive Pauline epistolary practice seems to represent the Christian letter tradition in which a Christian leader with cohorts writes a letter of instruction to a Christian community. As such they are not liturgical in function or letter essays in the literary letter tradition.

### 3.1.1. Pauline Letters as Letters of Instruction

The Pauline letter opening has a definite friendly and personal tone in the way the addressees are described, in the way the greeting invokes Christian ideals, and in the way the thanksgiving expresses personal concern for the recipients' welfare. Yet colouring this philophrnetic purpose is an official hue based on the titular designation of the sender, from the religio-spiritual ideas set out as the basis for the epistolary situation, on the lack of

---

<sup>98</sup>It is probable that Christians wrote family letters, business letters, etc.--letters which reflect the social context of typical Greek epistolary literature, perhaps even with minor adaptations which reflect their Christian belief. White, Light, p. 19, notes that the first papyrus letter clearly written by a Christian is from the early third-century C.E.



reference to the sender's welfare, and on the communal nature of the address. This co-mingling of authoritative overtones in an air of personal and friendly concern distinguishes the Pauline letter openings.<sup>99</sup>

Similarly the closing employs the typical Greek friendly or family type closing conventions. There are the extended greetings, the final greeting or wish for the welfare of the recipients, and occasionally a personal autograph or a post-script like signature statement. Yet, once again, there is an official tone to the closing, in the communal nature of the conventions especially the extended greetings, in the general absence of first-person type greetings, and in the occasional insertion of apostolic commands in the letter closing. In addition, the closing conventions are Christianized, especially in the way the final greeting reiterates the 'grace' wish of the opening greeting, in the way the extended greetings always emanate from fellow Christians, and in the atmosphere the innovative holy kiss greeting evokes. The Pauline letter closing is very friendly, but reinforces the official overtones and the religio-spiritual nature of the epistolary situation set out in the opening.

As one examines the Pauline letter opening and closing, two aspects stand out as distinctive: the communal nature and the religio-spiritual ideology. The opening, except in the case of Romans, includes co-senders though the

---

<sup>99</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', p. 1739; Doty, Letters, pp. 42-45.

letters as a whole have the style of a single sender,<sup>100</sup> and the addressees are always a Christian community. The closing always uses third-person type greetings to extend the epistolary situation to include a wide network of other Christian persons and communities. The Christianizing of the opening and closing has already been detailed. In adopting the structure of the Greek letter opening and closing, the use of specifically Christian words in the place where a reader/hearer would expect a specific Greek conventional term is where the ideology becomes most prominent. In addition, the words used to describe the sender(s) and the addressees are always Christian terms. In addition the innovative elements, such as the thanksgiving section and the holy kiss greeting, make the whole Christianizing process even more conspicuous. In essence, the primary sender, Paul, writes from one Christian community context to another Christian community.

The Pauline letters are not private, personal letters which maintain contact. The length of the letters<sup>101</sup> and the use of a many of traditional hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian literary forms and modes of argumentation suggest a larger purpose.<sup>102</sup> The Pauline letters are authoritative

---

<sup>100</sup>Prior, Paul the Letter Writer, pp. 39-43, analyses the use of 'I' versus 'we' and except for 1 Thessalonians, the Pauline letters employ 'I', even when co-senders are included in the address, though there are a few 'we' sections in some of these letters.

<sup>101</sup>Compare these average word lengths for various letters: papyrus, 87; Cicero, 295; Seneca, 995; Paul, 2495.

<sup>102</sup>Surveys of these various forms and modes of argumentation with bibliography are, Bailey and Vander Broek, Literary Forms, pp. 31-87; Aune, New Testament, pp. 188-202; Doty, Letters, pp. 49-63.



letters of instruction.<sup>103</sup> However, though the letter is an extended didactic tome, it is not an impersonal treatise in an epistolary frame.<sup>104</sup> The opening and closing and the letter-body again and again inscribe the specific epistolary situation (a genuine letter exchanged between two specific parties) and the specific occasional nature of the communication which in every instance is addressed to specific problems and needs the sender identifies and entextualizes in the letter text. In addition, the Christian ideological perspective is both presumed and asserted as the basis and context for the epistolary situation.<sup>105</sup> As one scholar correctly concludes about the Pauline letters: 'The result is something that is a real letter, not a treatise or a disquisition dressed up in epistolary form, and yet something much longer and more weighty than the average personal letter of antiquity, and something with a recognizable pattern'.<sup>106</sup> In sum, the Pauline letters inscribe a particular epistolary situation: using a friendly and even familial tone as the primary

p. 167

---

<sup>103</sup>Doty, Letters, p. 26; White, Light, p. 19.

<sup>104</sup>While in terms of length and instructional style, the Pauline letters resemble literary letters, as noted by Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen', pp. 1327-40. However, if one compares the inscribed epistolary situation in letter-essays as noted in a survey of letter-essays, the differences are distinctive, see Stirewalt, 'Greek Letter-Essay', pp. 169-71.

<sup>105</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', p. 1739, labels it the 'passionate/religious mood of Paul's letters; Kennedy, New Testament, p. 93, speaks of Paul's radical Christian rhetoric, 'that intuitive grasp of sacred language which makes no pretense to the devices of art and secures its authority from simple directness of faith and works'.

<sup>106</sup>Moule, Birth, p. 16.

epistolary atmosphere, they are nonetheless authoritative letters of instruction written from one Christian leader who stands in relation to a broader Christian community to another Christian community.

I. Taatz has recently argued that the Pauline letters must be understood as official authoritative letters within a communal context that consciously imitate Jewish epistolary practice as found in the rabbinic letters, the Elephantine correspondence, and the Bar Kokhba correspondence.<sup>107</sup> She correctly notes that there is similarity in the Pauline letters between the official Jewish letters in the way a communal context is invoked and in the way a collective official authority and a divine authority are invoked. Furthermore, she correctly notes that some of the religious motifs and on occasion the argumentative style used in the Pauline letters imitate Jewish religious argumentation found in Jewish letters (a fact that has already been established by previous research<sup>108</sup>). Yet, in reference to the specific epistolary practice found in the letter opening and closing and the epistolary formulas and conventions found in the letter-body, the Pauline letters do not imitate Jewish letters, but adopt and adapt Greek epistolary practice.<sup>109</sup> As the Pauline letter form is examined it appears to be an

---

<sup>107</sup>Taatz, Frühjüdische Briefe, pp. 102-118.

<sup>108</sup>See the references in footnote 102 above.

<sup>109</sup>Besides most of her argument rests on Jewish letters which post-date the Pauline letters. This is also contra, Goulder, 'Pauline Epistles', pp. 479-80, who sees the Pauline letters as modeling a six-part model based on the Jewish letters, 2 Macc. 1.1-9; 1.10-2.18.



adaptation of Greek epistolary practice for the Christian community spread throughout the Greco-Roman world, not the adaptation of Jewish letters for a Greek speaking community.

### 3.1.2. The Liturgical Function of Pauline Letters

There remains a persistent understanding that the Pauline letters function within a liturgical context.<sup>110</sup> The assumption is that because there appear to be liturgical forms used in the Pauline letter and because the letter was probably read aloud at a Christian community gathering, the letter was the liturgical basis for a community worship act. In particular the Christian greeting in the prescript, the thanksgiving section as a prayer, the doxologies and hymnic forms in the letter-body, the letter-body closing peace wish, the holy kiss greeting and the final grace benediction are all distinctive features which supposedly establish and specifically enjoin a worship context for the reading of the letter.

There are several problems with this understanding of the function of the Pauline letters. First, there is insufficient knowledge of the worship practice of the Pauline churches to specifically know how the Pauline letter functioned in relation to the community gathering at

---

<sup>110</sup>White, 'Ancient Greek Letters', p. 98, 'when Paul addressed his congregations, he imagined them at worship and himself as officiating at the service'; idem, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1739-40; Aune, New Testament, pp. 192-94; Doty, Letters, p. 25, *passim*; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 150-55.

which it may have been read.<sup>111</sup> When worship practice is addressed as a topic in the Pauline letters, the letter is never specifically mentioned as a feature.<sup>112</sup> In many cases, it is the later Christian church which liturgized the Pauline epistolary conventions and it is inappropriate to read this later practice into the Pauline letters.<sup>113</sup> Secondly, the so-called liturgical forms, especially those in the letter opening and closing, serve an epistolary function first and foremost.<sup>114</sup> If one classifies certain opening and closing conventions as liturgical forms (and that is not necessarily how they must be interpreted), they possibly represent liturgical forms borrowed from a worship setting for an epistolary purpose. Whatever the origin of these possible liturgical forms in the opening and closing, they definitely contribute to the Christian religious-spiritual tone which is an essential part of the inscribed epistolary situation.

### 3.2. The Communication Dynamics of the Pauline Letter

In chapter two a thorough discussion of the communication dynamics of ancient letters was presented

---

<sup>111</sup>C.F.D. Moule, 'A Reconsideration of the Context of Maranatha', NTS 6 (1959/60), pp. 307-10; W.A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 140-50, esp. p. 149; Roetzel, Letters of Paul, p. 38.

<sup>112</sup>Compare the Pauline teaching in 1 Cor. 14.26-40.

<sup>113</sup>cf. Didache 9.1-10.7; Justin, Apology, 1.65; Tertullian, On Prayer, 14.

<sup>114</sup>Gamble, Textual, p. 144, 'To the extent that such formulae can be seen to serve purely epistolary needs and/or to possess contextual relationships, and thus to be integral to the letters as letters, there is no reason to seek out a non-epistolary rationale for their use'.



especially in view of the scholarly opinion that ancient letters were conversational or like oral discourse.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, in chapter two, the view that ancient letters reflected Greco-Roman rhetorical theory and practice was examined, with the conclusion that there is no theoretical basis for the application of Greco-Roman rhetorical categories to epistolary discourse at least in the theory prevailing at the time the letters were written.<sup>116</sup> So then, with regard to the Pauline letters, as an ancient letter tradition, much of the same conclusions could be made with respect to the communication dynamics of Pauline letters.

However, two facets of the Pauline epistolary tradition, their oral nature and their rhetorical nature need further examination. Scholarly opinion persists in describing Pauline letters as a form of oral speech.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, the proliferation of rhetorical critical analyses of the Pauline letter assumes that the Pauline letter is consciously based on Greco-Roman rhetorical theory and practice.<sup>118</sup> Both these assumptions need further consideration.

### 3.2.1. The Oral Nature of Pauline Letters

The strongest assertion of the oral nature of Pauline letters comes from R. Funk:

---

<sup>115</sup>See Chapter Two, section 5.2.

<sup>116</sup>See Chapter Two, section 3.4.

<sup>117</sup>Funk, Language, p. 248; Doty, Letters, p. 45; White, 'Saint Paul', p. 439.

<sup>118</sup>See Introduction, section 2.2.

The style of Paul betrays on every page the marks of oral expression: imagined dialogue, accusation and defense, queries, exclamations, oaths, and the challenge...The letter, consequently, is an appropriate substitute for oral word--it is as near oral speech as possible...<sup>119</sup>

Most critics evaluate Paul's letter, especially the letter body, not so much as oral in the sense of lacking textuality, but as oral in style.<sup>120</sup> The recognition of the use of rhetorical devices like the diatribe in the letter body have contributed to this perception that the letters are oral-like.<sup>121</sup> Also, there has been a critical perception that the Pauline letter-body is modeled on the Jewish homily or at least distinctly like prevailing methods of oral preaching in the early church.<sup>122</sup> The use of oral-like discourse in a letter, however, contributes

---

<sup>119</sup>Funk, Language, p. 248, but as noted in chapter one, there is a theological agenda to Funk's perception of the oral nature of the Pauline texts.

<sup>120</sup>Doty, Letters, p. 45, 'he was writing what he wished he could say in person, and traits of his oral presentation come through from time to time'; White, 'Saint Paul', p. 439, is more reticent: '...the letter seems always to have been conceived as a substitute for Paul's oral presence with the congregation'.

<sup>121</sup>R. Bultmann, Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynischstoische Diatribe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910); S.K. Stowers, The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans, SBLDS, 57 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>122</sup>H. Thyen, Der Stil der jüdisch-hellenistischen Homilie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955); F. Siegert, Drei hellenistisch-jüdische Predigten (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980); L. Wills, 'The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity', HTR 77 (1984), pp. 277-99; C.C. Black II, 'The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills', HTR 81 (1988), pp. 1-18.



more to the 'effects of presence' a letter can create than to the oral nature of the letter.<sup>123</sup>

The continued perception that the Pauline letter is like a speech or sermon or some other form of oral discourse is an unhelpful critical approach to the text. The letter-text must be interpreted as written discourse. The assertion that Pauline letters are real letters that are carefully crafted, but more like oral discourse is an inconsistent interpretative approach. Critical readings of the Pauline letter according to categories of oral discourse may illumine the argumentative strategy and the possible effect of some Pauline texts, but this approach must also acknowledge that the text embodies the adaptation of oral discourse within an epistolary (textual) context.

The interpretative significance of the textuality of Pauline letters has not been fully explored in traditional interpretations of Pauline letters. What are some of the problems which the Pauline letter is better suited to address than the actual presence of the sender(s) in Corinth could address? Is the letter always a case of the sender(s) saying what they would say if they were physically addressing the recipients? How does the letter work as a substitute for the actual presence? How does the textual nature of the letter affect what the letter communicates? The use of the third-person greetings where one community greets another community in the letter closing in order to reinforce, even establish, the inter-

---

<sup>123</sup>Violi, 'Letters', pp. 155-57. Compare the comments by Wilder, Language of the Gospel, p. 39, about the letter and oral speech.

community network of the Pauline churches is a good example of a textual device accomplishing an end not as easily accomplished in person. There is a great deal of more work which needs to be done in order to assess the interpretative effect of the textuality of Pauline letters. Equally, more work is needed on the possible effect of the oral reading of the letters in the presence of the recipients.<sup>124</sup>

### 3.2.2. The Rhetorical Nature of Pauline Letters

The study and analysis of Pauline letters according to the categories of Greco-Roman rhetoric has resulted in a certain amount of confusion about the relationship between the epistolary nature and the rhetorical nature of the text.<sup>125</sup> L. Thurén has noted at least three major scholarly approaches to the problem of how the epistles are seen in relation to rhetoric.<sup>126</sup> The first approach sees rhetorical conventions as having only secondary applicability to

---

<sup>124</sup>See for example, P.J.J. Botha, 'Letter Writing and Oral Communication in Antiquity: Suggested Implications for the Interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Galatians', Scriptura 42 (1992), pp. 17-34; also Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat', pp. 22-25.

<sup>125</sup>The essential problem resides in classifying the letters as a mixed genre, H. Hübner, 'Der Galaterbrief und das Verhältnis von antiker Rhetorik und Epistolographie', TLZ 109 (1984), pp. 241-50, sees Paul's letters as real letters, but also having aspects of speeches; K. Berger, 'Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede: Zum Formular frühchristlichen Briefe', ZNW 65 (1974), pp. 190-231; idem, 'Hellenistische Gattungen', pp. 1031-432; idem, Formgeschichte, pp. 216-17; and Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 86-87, regard the letters as primarily speeches with epistolographic openings and closings.

<sup>126</sup>L. Thurén, The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter: With Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1990), pp. 57-64.



Pauline epistles which are primarily authentic examples of Greek epistolary practice.<sup>127</sup> The second approach sees the epistles as primarily speeches which incidently have epistolary opening and closing.<sup>128</sup> The third approach views epistolary and rhetorical categories as referring to separate dimensions of the letter as a form of communication and the entire letter can be analyzed by either set of categories.<sup>129</sup>

The analysis of the Pauline opening and closing suggests that they are genuine Greek letters which function within a real or authentic epistolary situation. The opening and closing are not artificial devices which frame a general treatise or 'speech' meant for a broad readership. Furthermore, the specific epistolary situation inscribed in the opening and closing of the Pauline letters is a consistent aspect of the entire epistolary discourse. But to recognize the epistolary nature of the Pauline letter does not exclude using rhetorical criticism, even

---

<sup>127</sup>Advocated by White, Form and Function; idem, 'Saint Paul'; Doty, Letters; and Hübner, 'Der Galaterbrief'.

<sup>128</sup>As advocated by Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen', pp. 1327-40; and Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 86-87; cf. Betz, Galatians.

<sup>129</sup>Thurén, Rhetorical Strategy, pp. 63-78. Other studies recognize the integrity of epistolary features throughout the letter, but use rhetorical categories to analyse these features, so Johanson, To All the Brethren, pp. 61-63; Bünker, Briefformular, pp. 11-18; cf. the early work of Wuellner, 'Paul's Rhetoric', pp. 330-351; also Schnider and Stenger, Studien.

categories of Greco-Roman rhetoric, as a way to analyze the persuasive effect of the entire letter.<sup>130</sup>

The problem of regarding the ancient letters as a form of oral speech has already been addressed.<sup>131</sup> There is no distinctive feature of Pauline letters which suggest they are different.<sup>132</sup> Equally, the fact that the letter was read aloud, perhaps on more than one occasion, does not negate the textuality of the letter as written discourse or the genuine epistolary nature of the letter. The main thrust of many applications of Greco-Roman rhetorical categories to Pauline letters lies in the conviction that it was the intention of the sender(s) to utilize ancient rhetorical theory in the construction of the letter-text.<sup>133</sup> The result of this interpretative perspective is to regard the Pauline letters as written forms of oral rhetoric. The problem scholars cannot solve is where the rhetorical

---

<sup>130</sup>G.W. Hansen, Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts (JSNTSup, 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 21-71, esp. p. 56: 'I intend to use the parallels which are applicable from the rhetorical handbooks simply as descriptive tools'.

<sup>131</sup>See Chapter Two, section 5.2.

<sup>132</sup>The arguments for ascribing Pauline letters to Greco-Roman rhetorical categories are (1) because there is a supposed rhetorical epistolary genre Paul is imitating, so Betz, Galatians, as an apologetic letter; and Mitchell, Paul, 1 Corinthians as a deliberative letter; and (2) because Greco-Roman rhetorical theory was common knowledge for a person like Paul, so Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 9-10; R.N. Longenecker, Galatians, WBC, 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), pp. cxii-cxiii; and (3) it was a theoretical practice to combine rhetoric in letters, so Hughes, Early, pp. 19-30.

<sup>133</sup>See the references in footnote 131 above.



intent begins, in the letter opening or in the letter body.<sup>134</sup> But as argued in chapter two, the theoretical justification for regarding ancient letters as instances of Greco-Roman rhetorical practice is unfounded.

The recognition that rhetorical criticism, even according to the categories of Greco-Roman rhetorical theory, is only one means of analysing the argumentative function of the various epistolary units is a helpful corrective to those who insist that Pauline letters are intended instances of ancient rhetorical practice. The application of a theory of rhetoric to the Pauline letter does not imply that the letter is a form of oral discourse, rather it recognizes the general applicability of rhetorical criticism to written discourse. This perspective leaves open the possibility of using other theories of rhetoric to achieve the same end, to assess the argumentative or persuasive function of various epistolary units. This is precisely the aim of this study, to apply the theory of rhetoric outlined in chapter one to the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians and to the matter of the rhetorical situation entextualized in the letter.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Pauline letter opening and closing mirrors the epistolary practice of Greek letters especially in the form of these conventions. Yet the modifications and

---

<sup>134</sup>Mitchell, Paul, p. 22n5, 'Thus by my definition a "deliberative letter" is a letter which employs deliberative rhetoric in the letter body...This does not mean, however, that the epistolary formulae (salutation, thanksgiving) do not play a rhetorical function homogenous with the argument in the body of the letter'. For a similar stance, see the references in footnote 125.

adaptations of the Greek convention create a distinctive Pauline practice. The opening and closing set forth a distinctive epistolary situation in which the relationship between the two letter parties is based on a particular religio-spiritual perspective and within a community context.

The opening begins with the sender described by a title which suggests his status in the Christian community, an apostle, prisoner or slave, always with respect to Jesus Christ. The address includes co-senders extending the epistolary situation to a communal context. The addressees are always a community described in spiritual terms. The greeting plays on the Greek greeting, but Christianizes it, introducing the blessings of grace and peace. The thanksgiving, though reflective of Greek thanksgiving formulas, is innovative, both in form and in the expressed concern, not for the physical welfare of the recipients, but for their spiritual welfare. The combination of these opening features creates a friendly mutuality, but overlaid with an official layer of authority.

Similarly, the closing is philophronetic, but also with authoritative overtones. Extended greetings expand the epistolary situation to include other Christian individuals and Christian communities. This communal perspective is reinforced by the holy kiss greeting formula which calls the recipients into community. The closing farewell is Christianized and becomes a grace benediction providing a final assertion of the religious basis for the epistolary situation. Signature statements and apostolic



commands are optional closing features which further undergird the personal and authoritative concern of the sender for the recipients.

The effect of these Pauline epistolary practices is to create a communal letter of instruction written by the community leader to a Christian community. They are real letters which inscribe a genuine epistolary situation. As letters, their communication dynamics can be described as epistolary and textual, not liturgical or as oral rhetoric.

The Pauline letter opening and closing conventions are interesting textual units which adapt common epistolary practice for a new social context--the Christian community. The manipulation of common epistolary convention works to establish and affirm the religious nature and the communal nature of the epistolary situation. The interplay between mutuality and authority also works to establish a particular relational perspective for the epistolary situation. With this general analysis in view, it remains to read a particular Pauline letter, 1 Corinthians, in detail in order to see how the literary features of these conventions create certain rhetorical effects which establish the particular epistolary situation between the letter parties.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RHETORIC OF THE LETTER OPENING

#### IN 1 CORINTHIANS 1.1-9<sup>1</sup>

##### 1. Introduction

After examining the ancient epistolary tradition in the Greco-Roman world and the Pauline epistolary tradition, the focus of this study turns to a single Pauline letter, 1 Corinthians. In this chapter, the purpose is to explore the rhetorical effect of the letter opening in 1 Cor. 1.1-9. This rhetorical analysis is based on examining the deviation from and the adaptation of the epistolary traditions outlined in the previous two chapters. Second, this rhetorical analysis will examine the particular literary presentation of the sender/author and the addressees/audience in the opening of 1 Corinthians. Third, this rhetorical analysis will evaluate the effect which the words and their arrangement suggest as they are instantiated in the text.

The Greek letter openings are stereotypical, thus deviation from the conventional introduces interesting and potentially significant implications for the rhetoric of the text. In most ancient letters, the function of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Earlier versions of this chapter were presented at the British New Testament Conference, Paul Seminar, Bristol, 15-17 September 1989; and SBL 1989 Annual Meeting, Rhetorical Criticism Section, Anaheim, 18-21 November, 1989.



opening was primarily philophronetic, i.e., to maintain contact and extend the relationship between the sender and addressee(s). This philophronetic function focuses chiefly on the 'actual' historical relationship between the letter parties. From a literary-rhetorical perspective, the letter, as a text, offers a 'freeze-frame' of the relationship as it is entextualized in the letter. In a letter, the dominant 'point of view' is that of the sender, or the letter's ostensible author. A letter, then, presents the literary entextualization of the letter relationship from the perspective of the sender/author. Rhetorically speaking, the selective textual presentation of the letter parties in the address by the sender becomes a rhetorical device to conceptualize, establish, and re-configure the 'actual' historical relationship. The letter text then inscribes a rhetorical dynamic in which the sender and the recipient(s) confront their relationship as it is inscribed in the letter text. It is this rhetorical dynamic which will be examined in the study of the letter opening of 1 Corinthians.

The epistolary function of the letter opening was: (1) to introduce the sender and name the recipient(s), (2) to establish the nature of the correspondence, and (3) to introduce the subject or purpose of the letter. To each of these functions there is a corresponding rhetorical effect, (1) to establish the relational perspective for the letter's epistolary situation, (2) to set the tone of the discourse, such as official, friendly, etc., and (3) to

establish the rhetorical goal of the discourse.<sup>2</sup> How the letter opening of 1 Corinthians works as a textual unit to achieve these rhetorical effects also will be explored in the following discussion.

Since this literary-rhetorical analysis focuses on the construction or presentation of the implied author and the implied reader as the locus of the rhetorical dynamic of the text, each part of the letter opening will be examined with respect to the sender/author and addressees/audience. Since the content of the text cannot be separated from its relationship to the speaker and audience, the content of the text will be discussed as it relates to the respective member of the letter parties, not as a separate aspect on its own, i.e. the full aptum.

In the following discussion, the four main parts of the Pauline letter opening as found in 1 Corinthians will be examined: the sender, the addressees, the greeting, and the thanksgiving. First, the sender, the addressees, and the greeting will be discussed. These epistolary elements form one main unit in the letter opening (1 Cor. 1.1-3), and are commonly known as the prescript. Second, the thanksgiving (1 Cor. 1.4-9) will be discussed. Though the thanksgiving is part of the letter opening, its extended size and special function in Pauline letters suggests examining it as a separate unit. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the rhetoric of the letter opening in 1 Cor. 1.1-9 as a whole.

---

<sup>2</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 15-16, suggests these three rhetorical effects could be labelled, respectively, (1) ethos, (2) pathos, and (3) logos.



## 2. The Epistolary Prescript of 1 Corinthians 1.1-3

The typical Greek letter opening including the Pauline letter tradition, included three elements, the sender, the addressee(s), and the greeting, also known respectively as the superscripto, the adscripto, and the salutatio. 1 Corinthians has all three typical elements. Each of these then will be examined in sequence according to the interpretive goal outlined above.

### 2.1. Sender

Typical of most Greek letters, except letters of petition, the sender is named first in 1 Corinthians:

Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφὸς (1 Cor. 1.1). While this represents the primary entextualization of the sender/author in the letter, it also begins to create the implied reader/audience.

#### 2.1.1. The Audience Perspective

For a Greek speaking audience, the qualification of the sender by a title in a seemingly friendly letter would have been unusual, especially from someone they knew. The name immediately followed by two nominatives signalled a more formal epistolary context and invoked an official tone since the use of a title in conjunction with the name of the sender occurred in official correspondence.<sup>3</sup>

The specific effect the use of the title, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, creates is difficult to gauge. The grammatical relationship between κλητὸς and ἀπόστολος is slightly

---

<sup>3</sup>White, 'Epistolary Formulas', p. 292.

ambiguous. It could be read as two titles, 'a called one, an apostle'. However, the lack of a coordinate between them suggests otherwise, in which case the more likely reading is to have κλητὸς modifying ἀπόστολος.<sup>4</sup> Even after sorting out the syntax, the semantic understanding remains ambiguous. Is it to be read, 'Paul, called an apostle' or 'Paul, a called apostle [or] called to be an apostle'? The first reading stresses the title; the second emphasizes the origin of the apostolic designation. The matter is complicated further because the issue of origins with respect to apostolicity is again suggested by the words, 'through the will of God', which follow. If 'called' is read as a statement of the origin of the apostolic designation, redundant as that is with word 'apostle' itself, then the divine origin is emphatically stressed with the additional words, 'through the will of God'. Conzelmann calls the latter an 'overloaded expression'.<sup>5</sup>

The ambiguity is possibly sorted out when the reader comes to the parallel phrase, 'called saints' in v. 2.<sup>6</sup> The most probable reading being, 'called to be saints'. So, the ambiguity in v. 1 seems clarified in favour of an 'overloaded expression' of the divine origin of apostolicity based on v. 2. But between v. 1 and v. 2, the

---

<sup>4</sup>H. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Hermeneia, trans. J.W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), p. 19n2; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>A. Robertson and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), p. 1.



ambiguity hangs for a brief textual moment in which the titular designation remains unclear and plays with the audience's textually informed perception of the sender.

But what is being asserted by this cumbersome, redundant expression of divinely appointed apostleship? The lexical interplay is between the words, 'Paul', and 'apostle'. 'Paul' represented the historical person who had come and ministered among the recipients, someone of whom they had a present perception based on a past experience. Each person's perception varied depending on the individual. Into that perception is introduced the term, 'apostle'.

It is difficult to know what the title, 'apostle', evoked in the ancient reader.<sup>7</sup> Was it a familiar title which was already associated with the person of Paul? Or was this the first time that the audience was introduced to this self designation? Based on the use of the word later in the letter, 9.1, 12.28, and 15.7, it is possible this was at least a designation the ancient reader associated with certain Christian individuals.

The word is seldom used in secular Greek. The verb, ἀποστέλλω, was used by the philosophical schools as a

---

<sup>7</sup>The literature on the meaning of the word is vast; see K.H. Rengstorff, 'ἀπόστολος', TDNT, I, pp. 407-45; R. Schnackenburg, 'Apostles Before and During Paul's Time', in Apostolic History and the Gospel, ed. W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 287-303; J.A. Kirk, 'Apostleship Since Rengstorff: Towards a Synthesis', NTS 21 (1974/75), pp. 249-64; F.H. Agnew, 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research', JBL 105 (1986), pp. 75-96.

technical term denoting divine authorization.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the noun, ἀπόστολος, tended to convey the idea of, (a) an express commission, and (b) being sent abroad.<sup>9</sup> However, the more common Greek words used for these ideas were πέμπω, and ἄγγελος.<sup>10</sup> It seems the use of the word by the Christian community may be an example of a word adopted to express their own conceptions.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the word, 'apostle', probably was a Christian term for a special missionary commission drawing on the root idea of a messenger or envoy. It is very unlikely that it conveys the idea of an institutionalized church office at the time 1 Corinthians was most likely written.<sup>12</sup> The Christianizing of the word is made explicit in 1 Corinthians by the use of the modifiers, 'called', and 'through the will of God'.

In 1 Corinthians the commission is specifically identified with Christ Jesus, ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. The sender comes as a designate of Christ Jesus, not the church in Jerusalem or any other power.<sup>13</sup> It is probably safe to say that Christologically, this refers to the transcendent, risen Jesus whose chief role is designated by

---

<sup>8</sup>E. von Eicken and H. Lindner, 'Apostle', NIDNTT, I, pp. 126-27.

<sup>9</sup>NIDNTT, I, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup>NIDNTT, I, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup>D. Müller, 'Apostle', NIDNTT, I, pp. 128-35.

<sup>12</sup>NIDNTT, I, pp. 128-30.

<sup>13</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 20; F. Lang, Die Briefe an die Korinther, NTD 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), p. 15.



the title, *κύριος*.<sup>14</sup> But whatever Christology the audience may have held, the whole apostolic role is endowed with ultimate divine significance by the qualifying, 'through the will of God'.

A third element in the textual representation of the sender is use of the word *κλητὸς*. This combines with the phrase, 'through the will of God', to stress the divine origin of the apostolic commission. The sense of election and vocation which stands behind the Jewish concept of calling was not common in secular Greek.<sup>15</sup> So in the text, a word and phrase combine to evoke a very special religious concept. That concept, being appointed by God, is emphatically stressed here in the interplay between the words, 'called', 'apostle' (or one sent out with a commission), and 'through the will of God'. The reader could not miss the point.

The textual designation of the sender as an apostle presents a particular relational dimension for the epistolary context. 'Paul' conjures up the historical figure. 'Apostle', whether a previous self-designation or a new one with respect to the audience, singles out a specific aspect of the relationship--the person Paul is a

---

<sup>14</sup>For the title *κύριος*, see v. 2, cf. 8.6. For the Christology of the title, see C.F.D. Moule, The Origin of Christology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 35-46; and J.D.G. Dunn, Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry Into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), pp. 179-81.

<sup>15</sup>L. Coenen, 'Call', NIDNTT, I, pp. 271-76; S. Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΙΑ: First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:21, SBLDS, 11 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973), pp. 127-59.

special envoy or messenger to the Corinthians. That position is clearly one of authority.<sup>16</sup> The emphasis on the concept of being called deflects any idea of self aggrandizement--'I did not choose to be an apostle, God chose me'. Furthermore, the divine call endows the role of apostle with ultimate significance--'my commission is not merely commercial or royal, but divine!' The authority is enhanced because of its transcendent source. The sender's relational role is specifically prescribed and limited in the superscription by the title, 'apostle'.

This special authoritative role of the sender is highlighted in the comparative designations which follow in the letter opening. Paul is a called apostle; Sosthenes is a brother; the Corinthians are called to be saints. The apostolic designation is unique to Paul.

A final aspect of the textual presentation of the sender is the reference to Sosthenes. As previously noted, the mention of a co-sender would have been very unusual for a typical Greek letter. The effect of a named co-sender in the superscription is difficult to determine since it is not a common convention. If it is meant as a reference to a co-author, there are no clues to joint authorship as one finds in 1 Thessalonians. If Sosthenes was well known to the Corinthians, there is no evidence in this letter or

---

<sup>16</sup>J.H. Schütz, Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, SNTSMS, 26 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), and B. Holmberg, Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); and J.-N. Aletti, 'L'autorité apostolique de Paul: Théorie et pratique', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 229-46.



from other evidence; unless he is the Sosthenes of Acts 18.17 which seems unlikely.<sup>17</sup> Since he is mentioned by the author, he most likely has some direct relationship to the sender, Paul. A team concept is implied by including him as a sender and by the designation, ὁ ἀδελφός, as the article might imply a titular designation, possibly a co-worker with Paul.<sup>18</sup>

The familial language in the New Testament also suggests that brother was a common term for a fellow Christian.<sup>19</sup> The designation of Sosthenes as a brother implies some sort of extended mutual fellowship which includes Paul and the Corinthians. In which case, the letter comes endorsed by another. It emanates from Paul as an apostle, but also from his co-worker, Sosthenes, as a brother. This inclusion of a co-sender depreciates any claim to exclusive authority: 'This letter is not just from me alone'. Yet, it safeguards the authority--'What I say has the endorsement of my co-worker and your brother'. In this sense, the letter carries official weight because it is to be read from a communal perspective--both what is

---

<sup>17</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 20n13; and W. Schrage, Der erste Brief an die Korinther, EKK 7/1 (Zürich: Benziger, 1991), p. 100; contra Fee, Corinthians, p. 31, who also suggests that the definite article implies he is known to the recipients. But the article may be formulaic, cf. 2 Cor. 1.1; 2.13; and Gal. 1.2.

<sup>18</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 31; see also Ellis, Prophecy, pp. 13-16, who suggests that the article with the plural form of brother is a formulaic reference to a specified group of co-workers, which may also apply to the use of the article with the singular form of brother.

<sup>19</sup>W. Günther, 'Brother', NIDNTT, I, pp. 256-58.

said and what is expected in response is protected and made accountable to a larger community.

### 2.1.2. The Authorial Perspective

With respect to the sender's self-presentation in the text, the superscription takes on a different significance when compared with the other Pauline letters. In this regard, against the background of the epistolary practice found in the Pauline corpus, it is a matter of selection and silence which become significant. Critically speaking, the rhetorical effect of the letter becomes evident as one evaluates the selective aspect of the author's self-presentation drawn from his conventional practice and from the unique assertions found only in this text. In this sense, the author's self-assertion becomes a rhetorical device. The author inscribes in the text, the self which best functions within the argument of the text.<sup>20</sup>

The significant aspect for understanding the authorial self-presentation in 1 Cor. 1.1 is the syntactical interplay between the words, 'Paul', 'called', 'apostle', and 'Sosthenes the brother'. Recent studies on ancient letters indicate that the superscription was important for establishing the function of the letter, function being partly determined by the sender's relationship to the addressee.<sup>21</sup> Recent studies on ancient autobiography

---

<sup>20</sup>The matter of Pauline self-presentation is rhetorically evaluated in G. Lyons, Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding, SBLDS, 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985, pp. 123-221.

<sup>21</sup>White, Light, pp. 197-98.



reveal that self-presentation is a key aspect of the discourse argument by soliciting empathy and establishing ethos.<sup>22</sup>

In seven authentic letters, the self-presentation occurs in a variety of ways based on how the named sender describes himself titularly. As noted in chapter three, 1 Corinthians is one of four letters which use the self-designation, 'apostle'.<sup>23</sup> The other descriptive titles are, 'slave' in Romans and Philippians, 'prisoner' in Philemon, nothing in 1 Thessalonians. Against this background then, 'apostle' is the most frequent title, but not a dominant self-designation.

As discussed earlier, the term is probably not a technical reference to an established office, but rather indicates a function.<sup>24</sup> What comes across as most important is the divine origin of this function. The apostolic function as emanating from the divine realm is hammered home by the concatenation of terms: 'called', 'apostle', 'of Christ Jesus', and 'through the will of God'. G. Fee notes:

---

<sup>22</sup>Lyons, Autobiography, pp. 27-29.

<sup>23</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.1.1.

<sup>24</sup>There is a debate as to whether the use of the title, 'apostle', has a polemical intent to counter those at Corinth who doubted or who were challenging Paul's authority, an apologia of sorts, so C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 31; Fee, Corinthians, p. 28. A non-polemical use is advanced by J. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910, 9th ed.), p. 1; J.B. Lightfoot, Notes on Epistles of St. Paul, ed. J.R. Harmer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1895, reprint 1980), pp. 142-43: 'The expression is not to be regarded as polemical, that is to say, as directed against those who denied St. Paul's apostleship'.

Above all else, this sense of call based on God's will is what fills the apostle with such confidence in his ministry. It also leads to the apparent ambiguity that so many moderns find in him. On the one hand, he can be completely self-effacing in terms of his own person or personal role; on the other hand, he can be absolutely unyielding when it comes to his ministry as such.<sup>25</sup>

Certainly such a pile-up of assertions concerning the divine origin of this function conveys an aura of self-confidence, and possibly self-importance. It is only self-effacing in terms of not being an egotistic claim to the role; it is self-aggrandizing with respect to the assertion of the divine realm's relationship with the person, Paul.

The word, *κλητὸς*, as a description of the sender is used only in 1 Corinthians and Romans with 1 Corinthians having some textual variants omitting it.<sup>26</sup> But all four letters which have the self-designation, 'apostle', also have some qualification referring to God's direct part in making the title legitimate: 1 and 2 Corinthians, 'through the will of God'; Romans, 'having been separated to the gospel of God'; Galatians, 'through Jesus Christ and God the father...'. With respect to self-presentation, then, the author asserts the apostolic function in terms of its divine legitimation.

The mention of a co-sender, 'Sosthenes the brother', comes as a curious addition. As discussed previously, the mention of a co-sender is unconventional with regard to

---

<sup>25</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup>The omission of *κλητὸς* by some early texts, A, D, is an editorial effort for simplification, see Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 19n2; and Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 30.



typical Greek letters. However, in terms of Pauline epistolary convention, six of the seven letters mention co-senders. It is also curious that in all four letters which use the superscription formula--Paul, (title); co-sender(s), (title)--that the title for the co-sender(s) is the term, 'brother'. What seems to come across is an implicit distinction between the two named senders, with the co-sender designated by a separate title being subordinate. The distinction resides not only in the different titles, but also in the syntactical order the formula sets up. This distinction is emphasized by the first half of the formula being weighted with additional qualifications and clarifications, while the second half contains only the name and a title. The formula makes it clear who the primary sender is and what that sender's primary role is in relation to the recipients.

With regard to authorial self-presentation in the superscription, the self-designation, 'apostle', is key. The term establishes the primary relational perspective for the letter. Paradigmatically, as one compares the other letters, the selection of the term 'apostle', has important authoritative implications when set against the self-depreciating self-designations, 'servant (or slave)' (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1.1) and 'prisoner' (Phlm. 1).

In summary, from whatever perspective one views the text, 1 Cor. 1.1, creates an aura of authority by playing on epistolary convention and by creating through lexical and syntactical interaction a strong authorial presence. With respect to 1 Cor. 1.1 there is a rhetoric of authority

in the strong self-presentation of the sender in this first part of the letter opening. This authoritative role emerges from the titular designation, from indication of the divine origin of the title, and from the use of the co-sender formula. From this simple epistolary convention known as the superscription, the text conveys an official and authoritative relational perspective for the rest of the letter, a perspective which becomes the implied role for the author and the textual context for the audience in the rest of the letter.

## 2.2. Addressees

In typical Greek letter form, the addressee is named after the sender in 1 Corinthians 1.2: τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὐσῇ ἐν Κορίνθῳ ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν. Again, this text will be examined with respect to the two textual figures, the audience and the author.

### 2.2.1. The Audience Perspective

It is at this point in the letter that the audience explicitly finds themselves textually inscribed in the letter. The adscription is the textual presentation of the addressees by the sender. As discussed earlier, most adscriptions contained merely a name with family letters often adding a dative case epithet expressing the familial relationship.<sup>27</sup> The adscription possibly reflects the Greek family letter form with the extended description.

---

<sup>27</sup>See Chapter Two, section 3.5.2.1.



The first deviation from the addressee convention is the community nature of the address, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὐσῇ ἐν Κορίνθῳ. Greek and Jewish-Hellenistic letters addressed to a community usually singled out one or more individuals.<sup>28</sup> Yet, 1 Corinthians addresses the whole community.

With Corinth being primarily a gentile, Greco-Roman community, the word, ἐκκλησία, would most likely conjure up the image of the assembly of the local political body.<sup>29</sup> This possible image is recast by the genitive, τοῦ θεοῦ. The resulting image is a powerful metaphor which draws upon the secular image, an assembly gathered to conduct certain specified affairs of state, with the genitive, τοῦ θεοῦ, distinguishing the image from the secular, thereby constituting an assembly gathered to conduct the affairs of God.<sup>30</sup> The addressee phrase, then, identifies the individual reader/hearer as a member of a community whose identity is specifically related to their new religious affection, God.

This basic description of the recipients becomes the overarching textual role assigned to the audience for the rest of the letter. This role assignment delineates and designates the textual relationship for the epistolary

---

<sup>28</sup>A Pauline example is Phlm. 1b, 'To Philemon...to Apphia...to Archippus...to the church at your house'.

<sup>29</sup>L. Coenen, 'Church', NIDNTT, I, p. 291.

<sup>30</sup>For the theological debate as to whether Pauline use of the term referred to the individual local church, the church world-wide, or to the image of the gathered eschatological people of God, see Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 22, 22n29; Fee, Corinthians, p. 32.

situation, apostle (sender) to the church of God (recipients). In rhetorical terms one could say the audience is constructed according to the necessary terms of the argument which follows.<sup>31</sup>

The initial descriptive phrase for the addressees, 'the church of God which is at Corinth', is expanded by three different grammatical phrases, all of which are derivative and elaborations of this basic designation. Epistolary convention allows descriptive elaboration of the addressee, but the extent found in this address is unusual. In addition, the elaborations pertain to the community, and the elaborating terms are not stereo-typically familial, but religious.

The first phrase, *ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, draws upon several different possible perceptions. In common Greek parlance, the idea of sanctification refers to high ethical morality.<sup>32</sup> Yet, in Christian circles the term refers to God's work of making holy, possibly drawing on the Old Testament concept of setting apart.<sup>33</sup> It is entirely possible that the phrase, especially here, is simply short hand reference for Christian conversion.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever the fuller sense of the phrase, the word, sanctification, denotes the idea of holiness.<sup>35</sup> Through this elaborating phrase, the community as 'church of God'

---

<sup>31</sup>Perelman, Realm, pp. 9-20.

<sup>32</sup>H. Seebass, 'Holy', NIDNTT, II, pp. 223-24.

<sup>33</sup>NIDNTT, II, pp. 224-27.

<sup>34</sup>So Fee, Corinthians, p. 32.

<sup>35</sup>BAGD, pp. 8-9.



is described as holy. So, a fuller picture of this 'church of God' emerges: it is an assembly who in relation to God stands as holy. Conversely, the implication is that those who are not in the assembly (or not in relation to God) are unholy. The dative qualifying prepositional phrase, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, focuses the quality away from any self-achievement and locates it within the person and work of Jesus.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the relational description is compounded: the church of God is holy in relationship to God by being in relationship with Christ Jesus.<sup>37</sup>

One of the rhetorical effects of the use of a communal adscription is to place the individual members of the community in tension with the community designation.<sup>38</sup> This tension is especially present in the switch from the singular designation of the addressee, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, to the modifying plural participle, ἡγιασμένοις; one would have expected a singular participle. This switch in number emphasizes the fact that the singular ἐκκλησία is composed

---

<sup>36</sup>The preposition, ἐν, is complex in its signification. Its ambiguity as both locative and instrumental is attested to in the grammars, M. Zerwick, Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples, trans J. Smith (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), pp. 33-37; C.F.D. Moule, An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, 2nd ed.), pp. 75-81; hence I suggest the ἐν phrase here includes both the person (locative) and the work (instrumental) of Christ.

<sup>37</sup>The word, 'relationship', is used deliberately to imply the full sense of what it means to be ἐν Χριστῷ. This is similar to S.E. Porter, Idioms of Greek New Testament (Biblical Languages: Greek 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), p. 159. See A.J.M. Wedderburn, 'Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases "in Christ" and "with Christ"', JSNT 25 (1985), pp. 83-97, for review of alternative interpretations.

<sup>38</sup>Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 2; Mitchell, Paul, p. 193.

of a plurality of individuals. This tension is manifest in the two phrases examined so far, 'the church of God', and 'those being sanctified in Christ Jesus'. Through these phrases the individual member of the audience is confronted with two relational questions: one, what is my relationship to God and Christ Jesus?, and two, what is my relationship to the community described and addressed in the letter? The individuals which compose the community designated by the address must decide whether the characterization or literary designation of the audience in the text is something he or she can assent to and identify with.

The second elaborating phrase, *κλητοῖς ἁγίοις*, emphasizes a quality of being that is a product of one's ethical action, action engendered from the new self-identity designated in the previous phrase, *ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. The two adjectives whose case relates them back to *τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ* echo and play off this immediately preceding phrase, expanding upon the circumscriptive description of the addressees as sanctified or holy. The word, *κλητοῖς*, has an implicit verbal sense echoing the preceding perfect participle *ἡγιασμένοις*.<sup>39</sup> This verbal sense helps secure the religious connotation for *κλητοῖς*: 'chosen or selected by God'.<sup>40</sup> The word *ἁγίοις* echoes the idea of holiness designated in the previous phrase, but its adjectival function makes it more a designation or a prescription by the speaker: 'as those who are made holy (set apart or consecrated or sanctified)

---

<sup>39</sup>Moule, *Idiom*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>40</sup>See the references in footnote 15 above.



in Christ Jesus, you are called (or chosen) by God to be holy ones'. This second elaborating phrase makes explicit what is implied in the previous phrase, that holiness is an aspect of being called. Such a self-identity implies an obligation to demonstrate or display that quality, hence the ethical constraint.

The designation, 'called saints', is plural, making it a community designation. The phrase is an obvious parallel with the titular description of the sender, making it a titular designation of the recipients: Paul, called to be an apostle; the church of God in Corinth, called to be holy ones.<sup>41</sup> This parallelism establishes solidarity since both share the privileged status of being called, but emphasizes the distinction in that each have been called to a different role. By making the phrase a titular designation, the audience is informed of the sender's perception of their ideal identity as an audience. In sum, this phrase designates the community's spiritual status or identity as both 'called ones' and 'holy ones'.

The final descriptive characterization of the addressee by the sender in the adscription adds the more mundane horizontal plane of existence: σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντί τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν ('[together]' with all those who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours').<sup>42</sup> The syntactical puzzle here is

---

<sup>41</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 32.

<sup>42</sup>This literal translation is included because of the difficulty of determining the sense of this phrase.

whether the preposition,  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ , links with  $\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$  or with  $\tau\eta\ \epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ . The former reads well in English, 'called, [along] with all those who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, saints', but is an awkward Greek construction requiring a different word order or a verb as in the English, 'called'.<sup>43</sup> The latter while more grammatically correct makes the address include the whole Christian church in its scope.<sup>44</sup> This seems very peculiar, for the letter is hardly a general treatise.<sup>45</sup> The attempt to avoid this by the suggestion that the  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$  phrase refers to the greeting which follows only creates another awkward construction.<sup>46</sup> A possible solution is to have the  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$  phrase qualify the whole clause,  $\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$ , as it is an elliptical construction, rather than being linked only with the word  $\kappa\lambda\eta\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$ .<sup>47</sup>

No matter which phrase or clause  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$  qualifies, the phrase associates the addressees with the larger Christian

---

<sup>43</sup>Lightfoot, Notes, p. 45; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 33.

<sup>44</sup>This is the interpretation of Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 23; Fee, Corinthians, p. 33. The solution by Weiss, Korintherbrief, p. 4; and W. Schimthals, Paul and The Gnostics, trans. J.E. Steely (New York: Abingdon, 1972), p. 258, that the phrase is an addition by a later redactor to make the epistle a universal church tractate is an unnecessary speculation for what would be an unusually awkward emendation by an editor.

<sup>45</sup>Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup>So Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 33; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 146.

<sup>47</sup>So Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, pp. 2-3; L. Belleville, 'Continuity and Discontinuity: A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians in the Light of First-Century Epistolary Forms and Conventions', EQ 59 (1987), p. 17.



community.<sup>48</sup> If  $\sigma\upsilon\nu$  qualifies, 'called [to be] saints', then the self-identity ascribed to the Corinthian community is shared with 'all those in every meeting place who call upon the name of the Lord'.<sup>49</sup> The effect of bringing in the larger Christian community creates a relational tension. While the association of the Corinthian church with the church at large creates a sense of solidarity and possibly a sense of strength in numbers, it also evokes a need for conformity through such unity.<sup>50</sup> This third elaborating expands the relational perspective entextualized in the address by making the audience not only accountable to the sender, but also accountable with other Christians designated as 'the church of God'.

The curious addition of the two pronouns,  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\nu$  καὶ  $\eta\mu\omega\nu$  added at the end of this descriptive phrase further enforces the association with the larger church. But what do they modify,  $\epsilon\nu$  παντὶ τόπῳ or κυρίου?<sup>51</sup> While proximity

---

<sup>48</sup>Lightfoot, Notes, p. 145: 'We must suppose then that St Paul associates the whole Christian Church with the Corinthians in this superscription'.

<sup>49</sup>The better interpretation of  $\epsilon\nu$  παντὶ τόπῳ is 'in every place' rather than 'everywhere'; so Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 33; Fee, Corinthians, p. 34; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 30.

<sup>50</sup>Most commentators see this as a deliberate emphasis in the address in order to begin correcting the factionalism and self-centred spirituality of the Corinthians, so Fee, Corinthians, pp. 33-34; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 3; Mitchell, Paul, p. 194; Belleville, 'Continuity', pp. 16-17; especially, U. Wickert, 'Einheit und Eintracht der Kirche im Präskript des ersten Korintherbriefes', ZNW 50 (1959), pp. 79-80.

<sup>51</sup>Commentators are divided, with  $\epsilon\nu$  παντὶ τόπῳ, Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 23n5; Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 17n8; F.W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, NIC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 24; or with κυρίου, Barrett, 1

favours reading it with  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omega$  such a reading seems trite and redundant, repeating the geographical scope implied in the sense of  $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\grave{\iota}$ . More likely, picking up on the  $\eta\mu\hat{\omega}\nu$  qualifying  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ , the sender ensures that Jesus' lordship affirmed for the Corinthians, is recognized as a tenant of all saints in every place: 'all Christians share a common holiness because they share a common Lord'.<sup>52</sup>

It is possible that the author by the word,  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ , is recognizing and associating all the Christian communities not founded by the apostle Paul with the Corinthian Church and by the word,  $\eta\mu\hat{\omega}\nu$ , with all the Pauline churches.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, this distinction between theirs and ours, while meant to affirm unity, also distinguishes between the communities associated with Paul and those not within that privileged orb. The use of  $\eta\mu\hat{\omega}\nu$  twice in this elaboration emphasizes the recipient's association with the Pauline community thereby affirming the sense of solidarity between the sender and the audience. This solidarity like the unity with the larger Christian community, also has its concomitant privilege and responsibility. So while the Corinthian church is brought into the larger company of Christian believers in every place, it is also, in the same breath, given a special status of being particularly associated with that community associated with the sender, Paul.

Corinthians, p. 34; Fee, Corinthians, p. 34; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 30; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 146.

<sup>52</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 34.

<sup>53</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 30.



To summarize, the address then, as a textual representation, works to create a textual characterization of the addressee or reader. The sender thereby both entextualizes his envisaged relationship with the recipients and prescribes the identity of the implied reader. Here in 1 Corinthians, the addressees are named as 'the church of God', 'those who have been made holy in Christ Jesus', 'called to be saints', 'who stand together with all those who call upon the name of our Lord in every place'. These descriptions both endow the addressee with the special status and spiritual qualities enumerated and define the textual identity of the addressee for the epistolary situation. As with so much religious discourse, the spiritual descriptions for the addressees come across as assertions or declarations not requiring argumentation to substantiate their validity implying there is a hidden authority behind their truthfulness.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the letter recipients as designated by all these descriptions finds themselves placed within a complex relational network which includes the author and the church at large, Pauline and beyond. To dissent from this identity is to step out of the world of the text; to assent is to accept the

---

<sup>54</sup>On the problem of religious 'rhetoric' versus philosophical argumentation, see Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 6, 104-107; Perelman, Realm, pp. 81-105; Leith and Myerson, Power, pp. 17-22, 131-37; and especially, M. Warner, 'Introduction', in The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1-25; L. Poland, 'The Bible and the Rhetorical Sublime', in The Bible as Rhetoric, pp. 29-47; D. Jasper, '"In the sermon which I have just completed, wherever I said Aristotle, I meant Saint Paul"', in The Bible as Rhetoric, pp. 133-52; G. Kennedy, '"Truth" and "Rhetoric" in the Pauline Epistles', in The Bible as Rhetoric, pp. 195-202

relationship between the sender and addressee as entextualized and prescribed by rhetorical effect of the adscription.

### 2.2.2. The Authorial Perspective

In the previous section, the adscription was examined with respect to the audience, exploring what rhetorical effect is generated through the textual presentation of the audience as the addressee. This sets up a peculiar rhetorical dynamic, the audience finds itself described and must decide to accept or reject the characterization or textual identity prescribed. In this section, the addressee is examined with respect to the author or sender, exploring how the sender presents himself in the adscription and how that literary presentation effects the rhetoric of the letter opening.

In the Pauline letter openings, the addressee is named as 'church of God', only in 1 and 2 Corinthians. In 1 Thessalonians, the addressee is designated, 'the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'; in Galatians, 'the churches of Galatia', in Philemon, 'the church in your house'. These are the addresses which use the word, ἐκκλησία.

Two things are distinct with the addressee found in 1 and 2 Corinthians. First, the genitive, τοῦ θεοῦ, attributes or relates the assembly to God denoting source and ownership. Commentators state that this phrase is an early signal of Paul's protest against the party-spirit at Corinth, the stress being on the collective singular, τῇ



ἐκκλησίᾳ.<sup>55</sup> It is significant that the phrase, 'church of God', is used five times in 1 Corinthians (four in the singular, 1.2; 10.32; 11.22; 15.9; one in the plural, 11.16), whereas the phrase is used only three other times outside 1 Corinthians, 2 Cor. 1.1; Gal. 1.13 (both singular); and 1 Thess. 2.14 (plural). The phrase itself, however, does not necessarily stress the unity or singularity of the church in opposition to a factionalized church. If there is any distinction to be made from the other Pauline addresses besides stylistic variation, the stress may be on the religious nature of the assembly with the qualification, τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>56</sup>

What makes the 1 Corinthian address emphatically religious in nature is the lengthy and elaborate religious descriptions which follow the phrase, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. The long and embellished religious description of the addressee in 1 Corinthians makes it the longest address of the Pauline letters.<sup>57</sup> The phrase, 'the church of God', serves as the basic dative of address. It is initially

---

<sup>55</sup>As stated by, Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 2; Fee, Corinthians, p. 31; Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 17; see also references in footnote 50.

<sup>56</sup>In 1 Thess. 1.1, perhaps the earliest Pauline letter, a dative prepositional phrase identifies the assembly as specifically Christians, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, with the genitive designating the place. It might be argued that this construction places more emphasis on the religious designation than 1 Cor. 1.2 with the preposition making explicit in 1 Thess. 1.1 what is implicit in the genitive case in 1 Cor. 1.2; see Zerwick, Biblical Greek, p. 27para80.

<sup>57</sup>Compare the opening of Romans with the longest sender element. Galatians has a long sender and greeting section, but a brief address.

expanded by the articular participial phrase, *τῇ οὖσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ*. Grammatically, the two dative phrases are simply, a dative noun with an adjectival participle. But paradigmatically, or considering the grammatical options to say the same thing (cf. 1 Thess. 1.1), there is a syntactical balance and dynamic between the two phrases: 'the church of God, the one (literally', being') which is in Corinth'. The effect is a slightly emphatic narrowing of the general to the specific. The point is made: the local Corinthian church is placed in context with the church at large. In sum, the two phrases work together to create a basic address: 'to God's church, the one in Corinth'.

The expression, *ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, is found only in the address of 1 Corinthians. As Conzelmann notes, 'In content, to be sure, the passage is good Pauline theology; it gives expression to the character of sanctification as being a matter of grace. Holiness is received, not achieved'.<sup>58</sup> The perfect participle, *ἡγιασμένοις*, recalls all the contingencies or processes which have made this status a reality for the individual.<sup>59</sup> The participle implicitly states how the reader has come to

---

<sup>58</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 21.

<sup>59</sup>The emphasis in this phrase is on the reader's union with Christ, brought out by the prepositional phrase, *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 18, misreads the perfect participle as temporally stressing the reader's past experience. Others see the participle recalling past processes, Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 30, faith; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 145; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 2; and H.-J. Klauck, 1. Korintherbrief, NEB 7 (Würzburg: Echter, 1987), p. 18, baptism. See Porter, Verbal Aspect, pp. 251-59, which argues against a definite past tense sense as the standard sense of the perfect tense; cf. Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 2, 'The perfect participle indicates a fixed state'.



be a member of this Christian assembly, with C.K. Barrett stating: 'It is God's act in sanctifying them (that is, in separating them for himself) and not any act of their own that makes these men (sic) into the church'.<sup>60</sup> The participle, as a modifier, also endows a particular religious status on the addressee by asserting that the 'those' alluded to in the participle are identified with all that the word, ἡγιασμένοις, conjures up: 'set apart', 'consecrated', 'made holy'. It is through this identification that the addressee becomes so named or designated.

The dative prepositional phrase, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, adds a curious specificity to the process and to the religious status implied by the participle. 'In Christ Jesus' provides a particularly Christian context for sanctification. This appears to be a Pauline expression, 'sanctified in Christ Jesus'.<sup>61</sup> The sense of the ἐν prepositional phrase in 1 Cor. 1.3 is interesting. It can vacillate between a full locative sense (cf. 1 Cor. 1.30), but also an instrumental sense (cf. 1 Cor. 6.11). This dual or ambiguous sense allows it to draw on the full orb of Christ's person and work.<sup>62</sup>

The second phrase, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, is a frequent designation for the recipients in the Pauline letters. Philippians is addressed to 'all the saints in Christ

---

<sup>60</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 32.

<sup>61</sup>See the only other parallel use, Rom. 15.16; cf. 1 Pet. 3.15.

<sup>62</sup>See footnote 36.

Jesus'. Both 1 and 2 Corinthians associate the addressees with the word 'saints'. Likewise, Romans 1.7 uses the same qualifying phrase as 1 Corinthians to modify the general addressee, 'to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called to be saints'.

With respect to 1 Corinthians, the phrase is synonymous with the previous phrase, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ, in many respects creating another 'overloaded' expression as in v. 1.<sup>63</sup> In both these descriptive phrases, the same idea of holiness is invoked. This second phrase, though, is more focused on the status than the process. The two words, κλητοῖς and ἁγίοις, almost stand together to create two equal substantives (called persons, holy people). Though, semantically, κλητοῖς is probably a 'verbal' adjective: the Corinthians are designated as holy people by virtue of their divine calling.<sup>64</sup> In the end, the phrase endows the addressees with the status of being both called and saints.

Interestingly, holiness in Pauline usage is always associated or related to a communal designation.<sup>65</sup> In 1 Corinthians, the church is designated as that community of individuals who have been made holy in Christ Jesus and called to be holy/saints. Lightfoot waxes eloquently on

---

<sup>63</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 21.

<sup>64</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 32, 'The fact of the calling is as significant as that of the holiness'. Fee, Corinthians, p. 33, translates the phrase as, 'God's holy people'. See also Moule, Idiom, p. 95.

<sup>65</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 21.



the power of ascribing this idea or ideal of holiness on the addressees:

He addresses the brethren not as the few, but as the many. He delights to take a broad and comprehensive ground. All who are brought within the circle of Christian influences are in a special manner Christ's, all who have put on Christ in baptism are called, are sanctified, are holy. Let them not act unworthily of their calling. Let them not dishonour and defile the sanctity which attaches to them. He is most jealous of narrowing the pale of the Gospel, and this righteous jealousy leads him to the use of expressions which to the 'unlearned and unstable' might seem to betoken an excessive regard for the outward and visible bond of union, and too much neglect of that which is inward and spiritual.<sup>66</sup>

But whereas Lightfoot sees the description of holiness as that which has already occurred and exists, the rhetoric of the text serves to designate or decree the audience as holy. By virtue of such descriptive assertions, the author creates the identity of the audience, as well as creating the rhetorical perspective or dynamic in the text. Through a conceptual link centring around holiness, these two descriptive phrases circumscribe the religious nature of the basic address as those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and as those called to be saints.

The third qualification of the basic address is a prepositional phrase, *σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν*. The only other Pauline epistles which have a similar prepositional phrase in the address are 2 Corinthians and Philippians. In those epistles, the *σὺν* phrase acts as an addition to basic address, almost like a

---

<sup>66</sup>Lightfoot, Notes, p. 145.

second adscription.<sup>67</sup> As noted previously, the phrase in 1 Corinthians is ambiguous; it can be read as an expansion or an addition of the named addressee or as a qualification of the phrase, 'called to be saints'.<sup>68</sup> Either way, the prepositional phrase acts as a closure to the adscription, returning to the broader concept of the church of God and designating it as those who call upon the name of the Lord.

The association with those who 'call upon the name of (our) the Lord' has a particular religious basis. This expression is a description of Christian worship.<sup>69</sup> By implication, the Corinthian church is designated as a place of Christian worship, thereby adding a third aspect to the religious character of the basic address. It is difficult to discern whether the association with 'all the ones' is with the church-at-large or the more immediate Achaian church strictly connected with the Corinthian church as in the opening of 2 Corinthians, 'together with all the saints throughout Achaia' (1 Cor. 2.1).<sup>70</sup> However the distinction between Pauline churches and non-Pauline churches in the pronouns *αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν* probably favours an association with the wider church.<sup>71</sup> This religious

---

<sup>67</sup>Schnider and Stenger, Studien, p. 19.

<sup>68</sup>See section 2.2.1. above.

<sup>69</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 33; Fascher, Korinther, pp. 76-78; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 23. Weiss, Korintherbrief, p. 4, suggests the phrase is more a euphemism for prayer; with regard the phrase as a reference to prayer see the discussion in Fee, Corinthians, p. 33n26.

<sup>70</sup>Most commentators see the reference to the church-at-large, Lightfoot, Notes, p. 145; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 33-34; Schrage, Korinther, p. 106.

<sup>71</sup>See section 2.2.1. above.



solidarity serves the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians well; it acts as a major premise for instructing the Corinthians on traditional Christian beliefs (4.17; 7.17; 9.16; 14.33-36) and for enjoining them to an obligatory charitable service to the churches of Jerusalem (16.1-4).<sup>72</sup>

Another aspect to this prepositional phrase is the implicit solidarity established between sender and addressee. Parts of the phrase, '...our Lord Jesus Christ...theirs and ours', sets up a foundational relational basis for the rhetoric of the letter. The letter opening establishes the following relational triangle: Christ Jesus has called and sent Paul as an apostle to the Corinthians; Jesus Christ is the mutual Lord of both parties in the letter opening, and he is the mutual Lord of the worshipping church at Corinth and elsewhere.<sup>73</sup> The relational perspective that is central to the letter opening (1.2, 3, 7, 8, 9) is that which is implied in 'our Lord;' there is no other place in the letter where such a concentration of the expression or motif occurs (cf. 5.4, 7; 6.11; 9.1; 15.31, 57).<sup>74</sup> This relational bond also becomes the foundation for the transition into the letter body where the essential letter purpose is set forth (1.10). Once again a distinct religious ideological

---

<sup>72</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 32.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. Fee, Corinthians, p. 35. On the Pauline idea of Jesus' lordship, cf. 1 Cor. 12.3; see Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 281; W. Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God, SBT, 50, trans. B. Hardy (London: SCM, 1966), pp. 65-107.

<sup>74</sup>Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 18; Fee, Corinthians, p. 35, notes the Christological emphasis of the whole epistolary prescript.

perspective is asserted as a basis for the rhetorical dynamic of the letter.<sup>75</sup>

This rhetorical dynamic easily becomes a rhetoric of power.<sup>76</sup> The shared lordship implies a mutual submission. But a functional distinction operates. While under Christ's lordship both sender and addressee are called, one is designated apostle; the other, saints. This effectively works itself out as an authoritative hierarchy: Jesus Christ is Lord of the church, Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ to the church, and the Corinthians are part of the church. In several other places in the letter this hierarchy is spelled out, defended, and imposed (1.17; 2.1-5; 3.5-11; 4.1-7, 14-17; 9.1-2). This spiritual hierarchy is part of the authorial perspective which is created and imposed in the letter opening conveying authoritative overtones.

To summarize, the sender's vision of the addressees entextualized in the adscription is emphasized through the concatenation of three descriptive phrases strung together. Through these three phrases, the letter opening posits a textually inscribed religious characterization of the addressees. The audience becomes as they are described

---

<sup>75</sup>The centrality of the confession, 'Jesus is Lord' for the Pauline corpus is examined by J.D.G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), pp. 50-54.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. G. Shaw, The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament (London: SCM, 1983), p. 62, '[the letter] is an exercise in magisterial authority. Its keynote is struck in the second verse--the Lordship of Christ. In the name of that Lord Paul demands unity and obedience.'



because they are declared as such; there is no argumentative appeal. The descriptions are prescriptive and demand the audience's assent in order to become a reader of the letter-text.

### 2.3. Greeting

As discussed in chapter three, the Pauline letter greeting or salutation is formulaic in a majority of the Pauline epistles, with only a minor variant found in Galatians and an abbreviated form in 1 Thessalonians.<sup>77</sup> The greeting reads as follows: *χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (1 Cor. 1.3). For a Greek speaking audience, this greeting would have been very unconventional to the standard, one word greeting *χαίρειν*. Based on the Pauline corpus, this greeting was stereotypical for the sender, Paul.

#### 2.3.1. The Audience Perspective

As noted previously, the greeting of 1 Cor. 1.3 as a deviation from the typical Greek letter greeting would have created at least three possible effects: (1) the greeting would have been emphatic by its novelty, (2) it would have established a religious context for the letter by the use of the religious terms, grace and peace, and (3) it would have established a personal and communal tone to the letter by the use of the personal pronouns, *ὑμῖν* and *ἡμῶν*.<sup>78</sup> These three effects need to be discussed in greater detail and in relation to the audience of 1 Corinthians.

---

<sup>77</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.1.3.

<sup>78</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.1.3.

The deviation from the standard epistolary greeting would be noticed immediately by an audience. The novelty itself would secure the reader's attention. The replacement of χάρις for χαίρειν may have evoked thoughts of a word-play. The double greeting, the pronouns, the length of the greeting--all these would draw the reader in, subverting any sense of getting the preliminaries out of the way in order to get on with the heart of the matter. This defamiliarizing would heighten the textual presence of the greeting.<sup>79</sup> Through this sense of novelty, the greeting would be more effective in constructing the letter's rhetorical dynamic.

The textual perspective or rhetorical dynamic created by the greeting stemmed from the religious nature of the greeting. This religious nature was primarily evoked through the words, χάρις and εἰρήνη. For an audience, the issue of the origin of this greeting in Jewish and hellenistic literature would not have been the primary understanding; the immediate comparison would be with the conventional Greek epistolary greeting.<sup>80</sup> Even then, the religious connotations are not necessarily straight forward until the ἀπὸ phrase; χάρις and εἰρήνη were both good Greek words for denoting well-being.<sup>81</sup> The syntax makes it explicit that the substantives, 'grace' and 'peace', are

---

<sup>79</sup>For an explanation of the concept of defamiliarization, see R.H. Stacy, Defamiliarization in Language and Literature (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977), p. 39 and passim.

<sup>80</sup>Lieu, 'Apostolic Greeting', pp. 161-78.

<sup>81</sup>H.-H. Esser, 'Grace', NIDNTT, II, p, 115; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 24n44.



that which come from God the Father and Jesus the Lord. Exactly how much the greeting makes explicit reference to Pauline doctrine is unclear.<sup>82</sup> Read against convention and in relation to the immediate textual context, the greeting is probably understood as both a greeting and health wish of sorts in which the sender invokes a Christian sense of well being.<sup>83</sup> Without reference to Pauline doctrine, this greeting wishes the letter recipients the favour and rest which comes from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is by identifying the Christian God as opposed to the any other god in the pantheon of first-century religion as the source for the qualities of grace and peace which makes the greeting Christian. The personal pronoun, ἡμῶν, modifying 'God the Father' secures a reference to the shared locus of faith which existed between sender and reader: the expression, 'God the Father', would not necessarily have a Christian sense.<sup>84</sup> A definitive Christian context is secured through linking by simple coordination, the phrase, 'Lord Jesus Christ', with 'God

---

<sup>82</sup>For a reading of the greeting from the perspective of the Pauline doctrine of 'grace', see Barrett, 1 Corinthians, pp. 34-35. The best summary of the Pauline doctrine of 'grace' is J.D.G. Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament (London: SCM: 1975), pp. 202-05.

<sup>83</sup>White, 'Saint Paul', p. 437.

<sup>84</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 24.

our Father': ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ  
Χριστοῦ.<sup>85</sup>

This adaptation of a simple philophronetic greeting makes it a religious event. White comments that the effect is that 'both sender and recipient are religiously and communally united by means of God's grace'.<sup>86</sup> The salutation as a religious event is either presumptuous or prescriptive. It is presumptuous by assuming that the sender and reader naturally share in this Christian experience of grace and peace. It is prescriptive by declaring that the letter is open only to those who receive this greeting as a mutual perspective. Either way, by transforming the greeting convention as described, the religious ideas and values imbedded in the greeting are given a special presence.<sup>87</sup>

The third aspect, the personal and communal nature of the greeting, emerges from the use of the second person and first person personal pronouns, *ὁμῖν* and *ἡμῶν*. Ancient epistolary greetings by convention were third person.<sup>88</sup> The explicit personalization of the greeting by actually naming the object of the greeting, 'to you', continues the

---

<sup>85</sup>See Schnider and Stenger, *Studien*, pp. 29-33; Schrage, *Korinther*, pp. 106-07

<sup>86</sup>White, 'Saint Paul', p. 437.

<sup>87</sup>Presence as a mode of argumentation is explained in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, pp. 115-20; Perelman, *Realm*, pp. 33-40; cf. L.A. Karon, 'Presence in the New Rhetoric', in *The New Rhetoric of Chaim Perelman: Statement and Response*, ed. R.D. Dearin (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), pp. 163-78.

<sup>88</sup>Lieu, 'Apostolic Greeting', pp. 163, 165; White, 'Epistolary Formulas', pp. 295-99.



familiar/friendly letter pretext found in the letter opening. The pronouns explicitly textualize the relationship between the two parties and assert that the sender wishes that relationship as delineated and circumscribed in the letter opening to be a basis for the argument of the letter-body.

### 2.3.2. The Authorial Perspective

Since the greeting in 1 Corinthians is formulaic and consistent with the Pauline epistolary tradition, there does not appear to be any distinctive authorial presentation in the greeting of 1 Cor. 1.3. The use of the stereo-typical greeting conforms to the overall purpose being set out in the letter opening. The greeting contributes to the authoritative and official, yet friendly and personable epistolary tone of the letter. The greeting affirms a religious context for the letter, asserting that certain religious ideals and values are shared and form the basis for the relationship between sender and addressee and for the relationship of the text to the audience.

J. Lieu comments about the theological importance of the greeting as a liturgical act:

Certainly we can say that Paul deliberately chose not to use the conventional Greek greeting with which to open his letters. Instead he used a form which would probably have something of a 'Scriptural' feel about it, but which would do more than this. Especially if the letter were read to the gathered congregation at worship, they would declare that Paul, as 'apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God', willed for and proclaimed to that congregation the gifts of salvation made available by God through Jesus Christ. Thus, the letters manifest in his absence the role Paul assumed when present; they were no casual correspondence but

vehicles of his apostolic work in relation to the churches.<sup>89</sup>

The greeting, however, could be understood rhetorically in its simpler epistolary function. By its deviation in form and content, it presents a self-assertion by the sender both in terms of heightening the textual presence of the greeting, and in terms of establishing the relational perspective for the letter. Yet, as a salutation, the greeting conveyed a Christian greeting wishing the recipients the sense of well being communicated by the words, 'grace' and 'peace'.

#### 2.4. Summary

The letter opening of 1 Corinthians conforms to Greek epistolary practice. In content and in the adaptation of convention, the opening is distinctively religious. As such the letter opening creates a distinctly religious rhetoric for the epistolary situation. The opening of 1 Corinthians is elaborate and extended, mixing the friendly and official letter form and content to create a personal, authoritative stance for the sender's relationship to the letter-text and the audience.

Specifically, the sender part of the opening is official and authoritative. The title sets the official tone. The selective presentation of the sender as an apostle conveys authority. That authority is deflected from being self-imposed authority to divine authority by the stress on the divine origin of the apostolic commission.

---

<sup>89</sup>Lieu, 'Apostolic Greeting', p. 170.



The address is a selective presentation of the spiritual or religious identity of the recipients as opposed to the conventional familial address typical of Greek family letters. The community nature of the address sets up a rhetorical interplay between the identity of the individual member of the community with the identity of the community as a singular entity. The address establishes several relational perspectives. It establishes mutuality by evoking the shared Lordship of Jesus and by naming the identity of both sender and recipient as 'called'. It establishes an important complex relational hierarchy between the main characters based on their titles in the letter opening: God and Lord, apostle, and church of Corinth. It also establishes a relational link between the recipients and the wider Christian church.

Most important, the address prescribes the textual identity of the audience. The spiritual identity of the readers is not argued as being what should be, but simply asserted as what is. The address in 1 Cor. 1.2 is a long and elaborate naming of the addressees, distinctly different from the conventional address of typical family Greek letters. The elaboration appears to be a way to coerce the reader into the designated textual identity.

The greeting reinforces the religious context which has been established in the naming of the sender and addressee. Again, the change from the stereotypical conventional Greek greeting highlights the religious nature of the language. 'Grace and peace' while words of greeting conveying a wish for the well-being of the recipients, also

specifically convey Christian ideas. The personal pronouns emphasize the existing and ongoing relationship between the letter parties and also reinforce the religious context by implying that it is a mutual or shared perspective and that it can be assumed as the basis for the letter argument.

### 3. The Epistolary Thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians 1.4-9

The thanksgiving section in the Pauline letters is a part of the letter opening in the Pauline epistolary tradition. At this point, some of the salient observations regarding the form and function of the Pauline thanksgivings from chapter three need restating.<sup>90</sup> The Pauline thanksgivings reflect the hellenistic epistolary tradition found in both Jewish and Greek letters which conventionally use a separate sentence from the salutation to offer an extended health wish and/or an intercessory prayer on behalf of the letter recipients. After the Pauline greeting, 'grace and peace', which also acts like a health wish, the thanksgiving section initiated by the verb, *εὐχαριστῶ*, signals a continuation of the letter opening. While a thanksgiving section following a health wish was not a common epistolary convention in Greek letters, it occurs often enough in extant ancient letters to assume its status as an epistolary option. It appeared most frequently and significantly in family type letters establishing a friendly, unofficial epistolary tone.

The most common type of epistolary thanksgiving in ancient letters was a thanksgiving report regarding the

---

<sup>90</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.2.



writer's physical welfare. A thanksgiving for a report regarding the recipient's physical well-being was a second type of thanksgiving and often was combined with the first. But the thanksgiving report in 1 Cor. 1.4-9 is for the spiritual well-being of the Corinthians. As thanksgiving reports often indicated one of the primary reasons for writing, an epistolary thanksgiving cast in such terms indicated that the letter was concerned to address the spiritual welfare of the recipients. This emphasis on spiritual/religious matters would be consistent with the same emphasis established in the epistolary prescript.

The rhetoric of the Pauline thanksgivings is based on utilizing an epistolary convention, but altering it formally and functionally to create a different rhetorical dynamic from the common Greek family letter tradition. The conventional Greek letter thanksgiving was philophronetic in nature. While the Greek letter thanksgiving was often stereo-typical and formulaic, it was here that the letter opening of Greek letters was most individualistic. The Pauline thanksgiving convention could also be interpreted as philophronetic, but it seems to function much more like an introduction to the epistle as a whole. The nature changed from maintaining contact and speaking about the general welfare of the letter parties to addressing the spiritual matters which would be central to the letter purpose or message.

The thanksgiving found in 1 Cor. 1.4-9 is easily identifiable as a literary unit.<sup>91</sup> The transition from the salutation to the thanksgiving is signalled by the word, εὐχαριστῶ (v. 4). Following a common Pauline eschatological motif (vv. 7-8), the thanksgiving is closed with a credal affirmation (v.9).<sup>92</sup> The thanksgiving is followed by a conventional letter-body opening formula in v.10.<sup>93</sup> Thus, 1 Cor. 1.4-9 functions as the Pauline thanksgiving for 1 Corinthians.

### 3.1. The Audience Perspective

#### 3.1.1. The Spiritual and Relational Premises

The thanksgiving for the spiritual well being of the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 1.4-9 creates a curious twist in the spiritual and relational perspectives usually found in Pauline thanksgiving reports. As noted before, in Pauline thanksgivings the verb forms and the personal pronouns emphasize the personal sender/recipient relationship.<sup>94</sup> In 1 Corinthians, the initial introductory clause sets up a personal relational context for the thanks, 'I give thanks...concerning you': εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν (1.4a). The content or reason for the thanksgiving, however, concerns what 'God' has done for them and is not

---

<sup>91</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 107-108; Schubert, Form and Function, pp. 30-31; and commentaries.

<sup>92</sup>Roberts, 'Transitional Techniques', pp. 193, 198; O'Brien, Introductory, p. 130n97.

<sup>93</sup>C.J. Bjerkelund, Parakalô: Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalô Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen, Bibliotheca Theologica Norvegica 1 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967), pp. 141-46.

<sup>94</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.2.



specifically for the addressees themselves or for anything they have done. The specific reason for the thanks is stated: ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.<sup>95</sup> The subsequent use of passive voice verbs emphasize that it is what God has done that is being given thanks for: δοθείσῃ, ἐπλουτίσθητε, ἐβεβαιώθη.<sup>96</sup> The content of the thanks indicated by these verbs actually 'depersonalizes' the thanksgiving focusing on the spiritual status of the readers as God's work.<sup>97</sup> These spiritual facts about the Corinthians are judgmental conclusions reached by the writer from a perspective which does not necessarily have to include personal, first-hand knowledge about the recipients.<sup>98</sup> In terms of the rhetorical effect, the thanksgiving report in 1 Cor. 1.4-9 undermines any

---

<sup>95</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 26. Cf. Rom. 1.8; 1 Thess. 1.2.

<sup>96</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 112-23; W.F. Orr and J.A. Walther, 1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes, and Commentary, AB, 32 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 144. However, some commentators recognize the problem, but phrase the content in terms of Paul giving thanks to God for the Corinthians, Fee, Corinthians, p. 36, 'In this thanksgiving, therefore, Paul accomplishes two things: he gives genuine thanks to God both for the Corinthians themselves and for God's (sic) having "gifted" them, but at the same time redirects their focus'; so also E. Evans, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, The Clarendon Bible (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), pp. 63-64; T.C. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897, 3rd ed.), p. 5; Grosheide, First Corinthians, p. 26-27.

<sup>97</sup>Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 5, likens the description to the Corinthians being in 'a state of grace'.

<sup>98</sup>L. Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, TNTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), p. 37, 'Paul does not give thanks for qualities in the Corinthians like faith and love, but for what God's grace has in fact done'.

notion of praise for the recipients while still appearing to have positive regard for the recipients.<sup>99</sup>

Further, the lack ~~of~~<sup>of</sup> any acknowledgement of the sender's personal welfare and the recipients' physical welfare, common topics of thanksgivings in Greek letters, only reinforces the impersonal perspective. The focus on spiritual facts limits the relational context for the epistolary situation: it is spiritual, not personal in the typical way.

By giving thanks for what God has done for the Corinthians, the writer adopts an authoritative position which objectifies the audience. The sender by selecting the spiritual facts which are the basis for the thanksgiving prescribes what is important with respect to the epistolary situation. In the thanksgiving report, a new spiritual status or identity, that which God has done for them, is textually disclosed and endowed upon the audience through their encounter with the text.<sup>100</sup>

This new spiritual identity becomes an all-consuming identity in that it claims the audience's present and future. The aorist passive verbs ( $\delta\omicron\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\eta$ ,  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$ ,  $\acute{\epsilon}\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\acute{\omega}\theta\eta$ ), which are factual assertions rather than references to past events, and the present infinitive ( $\upsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ) designates the spiritual status of the

---

<sup>99</sup>Mitchell, Paul, pp. 194-97, stresses the role of praise in the thanksgiving (1 Cor. 1.4-9) as part of its function as a rhetorical prooimion, but she fails to recognize that there is actually no direct praise for the Corinthians, which is contrary to her rhetorical analysis.

<sup>100</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 26, translates,  $\delta\omicron\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\eta$ , as 'bestowed', and states further, 'God has instituted and...transmitted his grace'.



readers.<sup>101</sup> Then in v. 7, the participial clause, 'waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ', introduces, as Barrett states:

a second definition of Christian existence...  
(Christians) having been redeemed and called by the historic work of Christ they now look for his coming to consummate his achievement. They live in remembrance of what he has done, and in expectation of what he will do.<sup>102</sup>

This future perspective is immediately reinforced in v. 8 by a relative clause which expounds the work of Christ in securing the future spiritual status of the Corinthians: (literally) 'who also will confirm you to the end blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Giving thanks for spiritual matters which were not yet a part of the audience's experience would have been strange in a conventional Greek letter opening. This future work of God acts like a draw string, tying off the spiritual package being presented to the readers. The repetition of the word βεβαιῶ in v. 6 (ἐβεβαιώθη) and in v. 8 (βεβαιώσῃ) places the guaranteeing work of God along the entire temporal span, from the audience's present to the end of time. Once again, the audience is informed of their spiritual status, but this time what is made tangible is

---

<sup>101</sup>The aorist passive verbs are not specific references to past events, but factive statements about the readers' spiritual condition, though implicitly this condition is based on their conversion. On this understanding of the aorist, see Porter, Idioms, pp. 35-39. Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, almost get it correct, 'the aorists sum up their history as a Christian community from their baptism to the time of his [Paul] writing'. The present infinitive with ὄντε is not contemplative or potential as often in a classical sense, but a result clause which describes the 'actual' status of the audience, so Fee, Corinthians, p. 41, 41n28; O'Brien, Introductory, p. 123.

<sup>102</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 39.

their future status: their spiritual identity endures to the end.

This ability to disclose the future also highlights the authority of the speaker. The audience is beholden to the speaker because he knows who they are and what they will be. He is able to objectify and define their spiritual existence for them. The reality of such an existence is driven home by the speaker's ability to give thanks for it. But this religious language as disclosure does not deepen the sender and recipient relationship. Such religious discourse distances the writer from the audience, for throughout this thanksgiving the speaker discloses what is and what will be and who does it and when they do it, very much an omnipotent authorial stance.<sup>103</sup> In a convention meant to seal the personal relationship which existed between sender and the recipient, this thanksgiving report designates the epistolary relationship around the audience's existence with respect to God. Only as the readers are subjects of God's action, are they objects of the sender's gratitude. Only as the audience is related to God in the way the sender describes can they be true recipients of the sender's message.

This last point is driven home in the final sentence of the thanksgiving: 'God, through whom you were called into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful' (v. 9). Throughout the thanksgiving God is the

---

<sup>103</sup>M. Sternberg, The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading, Indiana Literary Biblical Series (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 12-13, passim.



subject of the action, and that action is often related to the person of Jesus Christ. In this final sentence, the premise which undergirds all that has been asserted above is finally and explicitly stated. As an inverted argument, there is no argument, only proposition. The premise which undergirds this entire thanksgiving report is: God's faithfulness has determined your Christian existence and hence defined the essential relationships in your life.

This last emphatic declaration or credal statement acts like a benediction sealing and confirming the previous declarations. How is the audience to be sure of their status as objects of God's action bestowing grace and grace gifts, confirming the gospel in them and keeping them to the end? It is because the God who called them into faith and placed them in fellowship with Christ and with all believers is himself faithful. Implicitly, the God in whom you have put your faith is faithful. By declaring God's faithfulness and act of calling, the writer posits the spiritual reality as a simple, undeniable fact to which the reader must assent.

In a typical Greek thanksgiving, the writer usually furthered his relationship with the recipients by giving thanks to the god(s) for health restored, good fortune received, or delivery from danger or enemies. The focus of the thanksgiving in 1 Corinthians is gratitude for a divine favour ('for the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus', v. 4) which has positively affected the mutual relationship between the sender and recipients. While such thanks is expressed to a god, God is not the defining

context of the communication. In the Pauline thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians, God becomes the central character, and the determinant relationship. The sender's thanks is expressed to God for the work of God in the Corinthians. The recipients are those who are blessed by God and those whose spiritual existence is defined by the relationship to God articulated in the thanksgiving.

This channelling of the communication lines through the figure of God continues the rhetoric of power found in the address. By making God the relational focus, the relational perspective implicit in the letter form is 'elevated': it is given divine significance. This elevation of the relational terms elevates the authority of the textual discourse: it permits the limitation of the discourse to spiritual/religious language. In such discourse, the argument is often allusive, that which supports the assertion is assumed.<sup>104</sup>

### 3.1.2. The Rhetorical Logic or Argument

Closer examination of the apparent logical sequence of the argument reveals the nature of the religious rhetoric at work. The argument begins with a general assertion: *εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. An important aspect of the literary presentation of the audience resides in the relationship between the *περὶ ὑμῶν* and the *ὑμῖν* in the *ἐπὶ*

---

<sup>104</sup>Evans, Corinthians, p. 64; and O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 135-36, both speak of the assumptive nature of the discourse as a deliberate recall to truths already known by the audience which slightly begs the sense of the text. It is an attempt to solve the rhetoric of the text by appealing to history.



phrase. The  $\pi\epsilon\rho\grave{\iota} \upsilon\mu\omega\nu$  is a general audience reference without qualification. The second 'you', the one within the  $\epsilon\pi\grave{\iota}$  phrase, refers to the same audience, but is qualified by a limiting description which specifies the audience. It might be paraphrased as follows: 'I give thanks to God always for all of you, specifically because all of you have been given God's grace in Christ Jesus'.<sup>105</sup> The effect is to define the audience's existence within the context of God's grace in a most emphatic way.<sup>106</sup> In this thanksgiving the act of thanks is directly related to the audience's experience of Christian grace.<sup>107</sup> The reader's existence 'in grace' becomes the undefined premise for that which follows. In summary, this move towards specification of the 'you' by the  $\epsilon\pi\grave{\iota}$  phrase achieves two rhetorical effects: (1) it makes the thanksgiving a spiritual matter, and (2) it posits the recipients' identity as a general assertion without argument or definition--the writer declares thanks for the fact that the readers have been given the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

This general assertion is then qualified by two adverbial clauses. The first clause begins with  $\delta\tau\iota$ ,  $\delta\tau\iota \epsilon\nu \pi\alpha\nu\tau\grave{\iota} \epsilon\pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\tau\epsilon \epsilon\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega} \epsilon\nu \pi\alpha\nu\tau\grave{\iota} \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega \kappa\alpha\iota \pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta \gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ . The  $\delta\tau\iota$  clause primarily has an explicative sense, defining in precise terms that aspect of the grace

---

<sup>105</sup>The  $\epsilon\pi\grave{\iota}$  as causal, O'Brien, Introductory, p. 109, Schrage, Korinther, p. 113.

<sup>106</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 114.

<sup>107</sup>The idea of Christian grace is made explicit by the phrase,  $\epsilon\nu \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\hat{\omega} \text{ 'Ιησοῦ}$ . This is the only Pauline thanksgiving to emphasize 'grace' in this way, O'Brien, Introductory, p. 11.

experience for which the act of thanksgiving is based. Yet, the ὅτι retains a causal force since the reason for the thanksgiving is the grace; the reason that thanks is given is that the grace has made the recipients rich in everything.<sup>108</sup> The presence of such enrichment was proof that grace had been given.

It is not only the epexegetical nature of the ὅτι which clarifies the general assertion, but also the interplay between the two ἐν phrases: ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (v. 4) and ἐν αὐτῷ (v. 5). Just as Christ is the medium through whom and the sphere in which grace occurs, so also the experience of being made rich rests 'in him'. The grace which comes by being in Christ also makes one rich in all things.<sup>109</sup> The logic of the linkage between grace and enrichment or the way grace causes enrichment is unexplained. What is asserted by the repetitious ἐν phrases is that grace and the enrichment attached to grace are aspects of one's relational position in Christ Jesus.<sup>110</sup>

The relationship between two other ἐν phrases provides further clarification of the discussion at hand. The general ἐν παντί is quickly limited by a corresponding ἐν

---

<sup>108</sup>The ὅτι as ambiguous in Paul, see Zerwick, Biblical, pp. 142-44. For the explicative sense, Schrage, Korinther, p. 114; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 147; Fee, Corinthians, p. 38n12; for the causal, Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 34.

<sup>109</sup>A theological explanation of this fact is given by Lightfoot, Notes, p. 147; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 5; O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 109-12; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 26.

<sup>110</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 26, 'The addition of ἐν αὐτῷ, "in him," has the critical intention of warding off any self-contemplation in the mirror of their own riches'.



phrase, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει.<sup>111</sup> The textual focus is the second ἐν phrase which specifies the general παντὶ, not the content of the named riches themselves: 'The content of logos and gnosis must for the moment be left in the indefiniteness which here surround the two words'.<sup>112</sup> As the discussion proceeds, the general experience of grace which seems to underlay the thanksgiving is becoming very specific and could be paraphrased as follows: 'I give thanks to God always concerning all of you for the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus because it has made you rich in all things, specifically all speech and all knowledge'.

The second qualifying clause, καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν, introduces an adverbial clause which can be translated in several ways.<sup>113</sup> It probably is

---

<sup>111</sup>Possibly a dative of reference, N. Turner, Syntax, Vol 3 of A Grammar of New Testament Greek, by J.H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), p. 265. But the sense is to limit the πᾶς, not define it, cf. O'Brien, Introductory, p. 117n34.

<sup>112</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 27n26. See O'Brien, Introductory, p. 118; and Fee, Corinthians, p. 39 for an inappropriate definition of the content of these words at this juncture in the text. Similarly, the discussion as to whether supernatural verses natural gifts are in view is not germane at this point; see O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 118-19, for a balanced comment on this.

<sup>113</sup>Causal: Edwards, First Corinthians, p. 6; O'Brien, Introductory, p. 120; BDF §453(2); Turner, Syntax, p. 320. Epexegetical: Lightfoot, Notes, p. 148; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 6. Comparative: Groscheide, First Corinthians, p. 28; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 40-41. Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 37 and Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 27, both are nuanced interpretations which capture the complexity of the interpretive problem. The interpretative question is whether καθὼς modifies the verb of the ὅτι clause or modifies the main verb in v. 4. Those commentators which label the καθὼς clause as causal find the explanation or reason for the spiritual enrichment of the Corinthians. But a better reading, the comparative

best taken as a comparative clause, but whether the clause clarifies v. 5, v. 4, or vv. 4-5 is difficult to ascertain.<sup>114</sup> The flow of thought seems best maintained by reading it as a corresponding thought, 'concurrent and proportionate', to the idea of enrichment.<sup>115</sup> However, the two concepts are not parallel, hence the difficulty in determining whether it is the experience of grace or the experience of enrichment that the clause elucidates. Rhetorically, the clause combined with v. 7 seems to read best as a corresponding assertion to vv. 4-5: 'God through his grace which he has given in Christ Jesus has enriched you in all things, especially speech and knowledge (vv.4-5); just as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you so that you do not lack any [spiritual] gift...(vv. 6-7)'.<sup>116</sup> Grammatically, the *καθὼς* clause is dependent upon the main clause in v. 4. In essence,

---

sense of the *καθὼς* is retained and the clause modifies the main verb being similar to the *ὅτι* clause.

<sup>114</sup>With v. 4, Groscheide, First Corinthians, p. 28. With vv. 4 and 5, Fee, Corinthians, p. 40. With v. 5, Schrage, Korinther, p. 117; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 37; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 148; O'Brien, Introductory, p. 120.

<sup>115</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 37.

<sup>116</sup>A few exegetical points on the translation of v. 6: (1) *τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ* is probably an objective genitive referring to the gospel, but not necessarily as specific as the proclamation of Paul to the Corinthians; see O'Brien, Introductory, p. 121; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 27. (2) *ἐβεβαίωθη* is not meant to be a literal reference to legal language; see O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 121-22; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 27n28; contra Fee, Corinthians, p. 40. (3) *ἐν ὑμῖν* probably means, 'among you' or 'in your midst'. Attempts to dichotomize inward and outward connotations in the expression are misguided. The expression can include both, and the phrase in v. 6 is sufficiently unspecific to include both.



though, in vv. 4-7, there are two independent assertions about the wherefore of receiving spiritual gifts. One idea links this to grace given in Christ Jesus; the other, to the testimony which was confirmed in them. The *καθὼς* acts as a grammatical connection, inviting the reader to create the conceptual or logical relationship between the two ideas.<sup>117</sup>

As hinted above, the *ὥστε* clause of v. 7, *ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, modifies v. 6.<sup>118</sup> The parallelism between vv. 4-5 and vv. 6-7 is more obvious when the parallels between v.5 and v.7 are noted: (1) both deal with the idea of receiving spiritual gifts, (2) the subject of both clauses is 'you', (3) the object of both verbs is an *ἐν* phrase, with the *ἐν* phrase in v. 7 being an awkward replacement of the normal genitive.<sup>119</sup> So v. 7 echoes v. 5, stating that the Gospel as confirmed in the Corinthians has ensured that they 'lack'<sup>120</sup> no 'grace

---

<sup>117</sup>Hence the problem of commentators trying to assign the specific reference for the *καθὼς*; see footnote 113.

<sup>118</sup>So, Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 41; Lightfoot, *Notes*, p. 148; Schrage, *Korinther*, p. 115; O'Brien, *Introductory*, p. 124n73. Contra Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 27; and Robertson and Plummer, *1 Corinthians*, p. 6, who refer it back to v. 4.

<sup>119</sup>See the comments in Fee, *Corinthians*, pp. 41-42; and Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>120</sup>'Lack' is the preferred translation, so Fee, *Corinthians*, pp. 41-42; and Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 27. Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, p. 38; and Lightfoot, *Notes*, p. 148, translate, 'fall short', emphasizing no deficiency in the gifts they do possess, rather than no deficiency in the possession of all the gifts.

gifts'.<sup>121</sup> The text

informs the audience of their spiritual reality, and a magnificent reality it is. Once again, the argument rests on declaration as the explanation as to how the Gospel endows the readers with 'grace gifts' is unstated.

This present spiritual reality receives its proper temporal perspective with the abrupt introduction of an eschatological note: ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>122</sup> The participle, ἀπεκδεχομένους, is intensified with the double prefix providing the correct disposition for the readers: eagerness.<sup>123</sup> The spiritual identity of the readers is not only stated--fully gifted; but their spiritual goal--the revelation of our Lord, and their spiritual manner--eagerly waiting, are also declared.<sup>124</sup>

This eschatological note is driven home in v. 8 as the argument takes an excursus at the mention of 'our Lord Jesus Christ': ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους

---

<sup>121</sup>As v. 7 restates v. 5 from a different angle, the idea of gifts of the spirit are in view, not the gift of grace, so Fee, Corinthians, p. 42; contra Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 38; and Lightfoot, Notes, p. 148.

<sup>122</sup>See above for the temporal perspective in the text.

<sup>123</sup>MM, p. 56; BAGD, p. 83.

<sup>124</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 125, 'The clause in 1 Cor. 1.7 is almost another definition of a Christian'. O'Brien also rightly notes that the description is inclusive, referring to the whole church as the addressees. For a carefully nuanced discussion of how the problem of over-realized eschatology in the Corinthian church may be an aspect of this eschatological note in the text, see A.C. Thiselton, 'Realized Eschatology at Corinth', NTS 24 (1977/78), pp. 510-26.



ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>125</sup> Though an excursus, it uses the same verb as v. 6, βεβαιόω, but in v. 8 this action is attributed to Christ, and 'the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ' in v. 7 becomes 'in the day of our Lord Jesus' in v. 8. These links with the previous discussion round off the argument by providing an eschatological climax. This eschatological climax unfolds another aspect of the spiritual identity of the audience: they are now identified as ἀνεγκλήτους ('blameless'). This status is secured by the action of Jesus Christ. The status is ἕως τέλους, a temporal description which extends the present onward to the 'end of the world'. This verse reveals their spiritual status as ultimately 'blameless' and as a status which is secure to the end of time. The awkwardness of this verse stems from the change in subject from the work of God to the work of Christ, and from the change in time from what God has done to what Christ will do. With regard to the argument, once again, the description is stated as a fact and there is no explanation of how 'blamelessness' relates to that which preceded or why a change in subject is required.

The thanksgiving concludes with a second general assertion, πιστὸς ὁ θεός, which is more like a credal

---

<sup>125</sup>The antecedent for ὃς is Jesus Christ as argued by Lightfoot, Notes, p. 149; see also Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 39; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 7; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 31; Morris, 1 Corinthians, p. 38. Contra O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 127-8, whose lengthy discussion neglects the arguments of Lightfoot; and Fee, Corinthians, pp. 43-44, who wrongly states, 'all modern commentators' take God as the subject'; and Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 28, who arbitrarily omits the καί to support his reading.

affirmation or confession.<sup>126</sup> It concludes both the thanksgiving section and the opening as a whole. This second major assertion, 'God is faithful', becomes the fact which secures the 'argument' (or disclosures) of vv.4-8. This simple sentence is expanded by a prepositional phrase which modifies the subject: δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. The centrality of God is again emphasized: the διὰ with the genitive states the principle cause;<sup>127</sup> and the aorist passive verb echoes the previous work of God in vv.4-8. The 'call' motif in vv. 1 and 2 is picked up and restated as an appropriate closure. Once again, the full name of Jesus Christ is stated with the recurrent third person possessive pronoun announcing the shared relational perspective between the sender and recipients so carefully constructed in the letter opening.<sup>128</sup> The introduction of the idea of κοινωνία with Christ Jesus provides a way to

---

<sup>126</sup>Roberts, 'Transitional Techniques', pp. 193, 198; O'Brien, Introductory, p. 130, calls it a 'confirming climax'; cf. Schubert, Form and Function, p. 31, 'confirmatory force'; Schrage, Korinther, p. 123, 'a benediction'. The effort to make vv. 8-10 a wish-prayer or intercessory prayer, Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 97-101, neglects the grammar of the text.

<sup>127</sup>See Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 29; Fee, Corinthians, p. 45n46; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 150. For a grammatical discussion, Zerwick, Biblical, p. 38.

<sup>128</sup>See especially, O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 132-33; cf. Fee, Corinthians, p. 45; and Schrage, Korinther, p. 124. For a more doctrinal approach to the Christology, see Kramer, Christ, pp. 142, 174, 194-95.



summarize the ἐν Χριστῷ motif and posit a premise. i.e. mutual fellowship, for the letter-body opening (1.10).<sup>129</sup>

The language of this last assertion is formal and final. Formality is evident in the use of the full title of Jesus and the careful use of prepositions and articles. The strong force of the elided copulative sentence and the sense of closure centred around the 'call' motif provide the finality. But once again, the logical connection with what precedes is unclear. The final statement provides a self-confirming conclusion which restates more than proves. As assertion, the audience is beholden to assent.

### 3.1.3. Summary

In summary with respect to the audience perspective, the shift in the thanksgiving from expressing thanks for the personal welfare of the sender and/or the recipients to expressing thanks for what God has done spiritually for the Corinthians is a clever adaptation of convention. By such a shift, the speaker establishes the spiritual welfare of the recipients as the central concern of the letter. In addition, the thanksgiving sets up a rhetorical relational perspective in which the person and work of God and Christ become the determining relationship for the reader's textual identity and for the reader's ongoing relationship with the sender. This relational focus actually

---

<sup>129</sup>The genitive τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ is best read as an objective genitive, O'Brien, Introductory, p. 131n103. Mitchell, Paul, p. 197, sees the reference to fellowship of Jesus Christ as an appeal to unity and an introduction to the body of Christ motif. Perhaps, but it works in the immediate context as a transition to the letter-body opening, see Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 40.

depersonalizes the thanksgiving, making it an abstract discussion about the audience rather than a philophronetic personal exchange. Furthermore, the text inscribes a temporal perspective in the discussion which encompasses the audience's past, present and future. Such a temporal spectrum conveys the speaker's authoritative insight into the spiritual nature of the reader as it displays the speaker's knowledge about God's action on behalf of the audience. All this is put forward in an argument based on assertion and assumed logicity.<sup>130</sup>

### 3.2. The Authorial Perspective

A second aspect of the rhetoric of the thanksgiving is the literary presentation of the sender. Three specific aspects of the literary presentation of the sender will be examined: (1) differences from other Pauline thanksgivings, (2) the thanksgiving as a type of introduction, and (3) the presentation of the implied author in the thanksgiving.

#### 3.2.1. Differences from other Pauline Thanksgivings

Commentators generally note that the thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians differs from other Pauline thanksgivings in the absence of any thanks for the faith of the recipients or for any quality which originates in the Corinthian community itself,<sup>131</sup> and in the absence of any intercession

---

<sup>130</sup>For a similar analysis of another Pauline text, see Jasper, 'The Rhetoric of St. Paul's Letters: Heaven Forbid!', in Rhetoric.

<sup>131</sup>R.N. Longenecker, 'On Ascertaining Paul's Theology in 1 Corinthians: A Response to Victor Paul Furnish' (Unpublished SBL Paper, Pauline Theology Group, 1989), p. 5; Morris, 1 Corinthians, p. 37; Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, p. 144; Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 19,



or remembrance for the church in the prayer aspect of the thanksgiving (vv. 8-9).<sup>132</sup> These differences are usually translated into an implicit criticism of the Corinthian's spirituality and Christian practice suggesting that if the situation were different, the thanksgiving would have been more like the other Pauline thanksgivings.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, commentators tend to note the ways in which the Pauline thanksgiving convention is specifically tailored to the contents of the Corinthian letter.<sup>134</sup>

In order to put the differences between the thanksgiving in 1 Corinthians and the other Pauline thanksgivings in perspective, several functional aspects regarding the thanksgiving convention need re-mentioning. As previously discussed, the thanksgiving's epistolary function was to signal the basic purpose of the letter. It could also indicate or introduce some of the main themes discussed in the letter body.<sup>135</sup> The thanksgiving also

---

stresses that no aspect of the Corinthian's present experience is included in the thanksgiving.

<sup>132</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 107; Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 19; cf. Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 97-101, 141, who reads this as an intercessory wish prayer, but over reads the volitional sense of the future tense verb, *βεβαιώσει*.

<sup>133</sup>Longenecker, 'Paul's Theology', p. 5, 'Paul's cause for thanksgiving here is exclusively rooted in God's grace to the Corinthians (1.4) and God's faithfulness (1.9), with the lack of any mention of thanks for what originates in the Corinth community probably reflective of Paul's unhappiness over what was going on in the church there'; see also Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 20.

<sup>134</sup>Belleville, 'Continuity', pp. 18-20, calls it 'a table of contents to 1 Cor.'; O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 133, 137; Betz, 'Rhetoric and Theology', pp. 24-39; Stowers, Letter Writing, p. 22.

<sup>135</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.2.3.

functioned as part of the epistolary introduction which sought to pave the way for the letter-body by bringing the audience into the proper disposition for what follows.<sup>136</sup> With respect to these two main functions, the thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians can be evaluated in more positive terms. It may well be that the absence of some common features of Pauline thanksgivings suggests a negative situation which prohibited their inclusion, but that is an argument from silence. It is more likely that the careful individual construction of the thanksgiving within a conventional form indicates the specific function of this particular thanksgiving.

For instance, the criticism that the thanksgiving 'lacks any mention of their faith as a cause of thanksgiving as is found in other thanksgiving units'<sup>137</sup> does not necessarily indicate a lack of faith on the Corinthian's part. The faith of the Corinthians is certainly an implicit element of the thanksgiving--'the testimony (Gospel) of Christ was confirmed in you' (v. 6). Similarly, 'grace' which is the main theme for the thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians is described as given, *δοθεῖσθαι*, an aorist passive verb which most commentators take as a reference to conversion and baptism, implying a

---

<sup>136</sup>This corresponds with the function of the rhetorical exordium or proem which seeks to gain the attention of the audience and their goodwill or sympathy, Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 23-24.

<sup>137</sup>Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 19. Faith is only a item of thanksgiving in three letters, 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philemon.



status of being in the faith.<sup>138</sup> Compare also v. 9, 'you were called into fellowship with his son'.

The point of the thanksgiving does not seem to be to imply there is a faith problem, but that the particular emphasis upon the theme of 'grace given by God' is the important point for the basis of the letter. O'Brien notes, 'In no other introductory thanksgiving is the grace of God found to be the basis or ground for the giving of thanks'.<sup>139</sup> The grace of God, then, with the specific benefits delineated in the thanksgiving of 1 Cor. 4-9 becomes a major premise for the rest of the letter.

What is different about the thanksgiving found in 1 Corinthians? It is one of the briefest of all the Pauline thanksgivings. It is the only thanksgiving in which God's grace (vv. 4-8) and God's faithfulness (v. 9) are the specific reasons for giving thanks. Also, this is the only thanksgiving without any intercessory prayer or prayer remembrance, which may partially explain its brevity.

The significance of these differences for the rhetoric of the letter opening need evaluating. That the thanksgiving is brief contributes to the formality and finality of the passage, as discussed above. From the perspective of Greek letters, however, it is not brief; only in comparison with other Pauline thanksgivings is it brief. One possible effect of this 'brief' Pauline thanksgiving, from the sender's perspective, is that it

---

<sup>138</sup>However, as noted earlier, footnote 101, the aorist verb does not have to have a specific past event in view.

<sup>139</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, p. 111.

does not create the degree of personal intimacy found in other Pauline thanksgivings. This corresponds to the effect of objectifying the audience and distancing the audience through indirect praise as discussed above.

The emphasis on the themes of God's grace and God's faithfulness relates to the purpose of the letter. Clearly the emphasis is on God's action as opposed to the acts or qualities of the Corinthians themselves, establishing a theocentric basis for that which follows. Similarly, the themes of God's grace and God's faithfulness become the spiritual premises or theological foundation for the letter's various arguments. Various aspects of the significance of these themes will be discussed under the thanksgiving as an introduction. This theocentric emphasis establishes the spiritual authority of the letter writer in that it conveys that he can articulate both the person and work of God as it directly relates to the audience. This reinforces the effect of the discourse as assertive religious disclosure.

The effect of not including any intercession or prayer remembrance is not necessarily to imply that the author is displeased with the recipients in some way. The thanksgiving of 1 Cor. 1.4-9 firmly establishes a tone of thankfulness; it is not mere flattery or irony.<sup>140</sup> In addition, since it often appears that an explicit

---

<sup>140</sup>Contra P. Allo, Première Épître aux Corinthiens (Paris: Gabalda, 1956, 2nd ed.), p. 6, who sees the the thanksgiving as ironic in view of the problems in the Corinthian church. Irony is rejected by O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 113-14; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 5; Fee, Corinthians, p. 36.



intercession correlates directly to the letter purpose, by not including an explicit intercession, the writer did not 'telegraph' so markedly the intent of the letter-body argument.

### 3.2.2. The Thanksgiving as an Introduction

Most recent rhetorical critical analyses of 1 Corinthians label the thanksgiving section, 1 Cor. 1.4-9 as the exordium to the letter.<sup>141</sup> These rhetorical analyses recognize the function of the thanksgiving as providing an introduction to the letter. However, the exclusion of the prescript as part of the exordium is unwarranted. All elements of the letter opening establish the epistolary situation thereby acting like the exordium.<sup>142</sup> To suggest that the exordium begins at the thanksgiving suggests that the 'speech' or persuasive argument of the letter does not begin until v. 4. But as has been demonstrated above, the prescript, 1 Cor. 1.1-3, has important features which shape and determine the epistolary situation for the whole of the letter. Still, it is important to recognize the manner in which the Pauline thanksgiving in 1 Corinthians acts as a kind of introduction.

The exordium function of introducing the speaker to the audience has been accomplished in the letter prescript

---

<sup>141</sup>An exordium: Schrage, Korinther, p. 111. A proem, Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 24-25; J.B. Chance, 'Paul's Apology to the Corinthians', Perspectives in Religious Studies 9 (1982), pp. 148; Betz, 'Rhetoric and Theology', p. 33; Mitchell, Paul, p. 194.

<sup>142</sup>The separation of the letter opening from the exordium is because the opening, 1.1-3, is epistolary, with 1.4ff as rhetorical or speech like.

section, the superscription. There both the name and relational identity of the writer and co-sender were set forth: 'Paul, the special emissary of Jesus Christ according to the divine will and Sosthenes, the Christian brother' (v. 1). In the thanksgiving, however, the writer inscribes himself by the use of the first person singular verb, *εὐαριστῶ*, which excludes the co-sender. This most likely signals that the functional role of naming the co-sender is completed in the superscription and that the essential relational perspective of the letter primarily concerns the sender, Paul, and the recipients, the church of God in Corinth.

As already noted, 1 Cor. 1.4-9, sets out the main subject or purpose of the letter as a discussion of the spiritual status of the recipients as those who stand within God's grace. The thanksgiving's exclusive concern for the recipient's spiritual identity equates with the effect of the religious descriptive qualifications of the addressee in the adscription (v. 2).

With regard to this general purpose, a number of specific spiritual topics or themes are mentioned in the thanksgiving introducing a number of the important topics in the letter-body. Some commentators are quick to suggest that all the major themes of the letter are introduced in the thanksgiving.<sup>143</sup> But rather than attempting to

---

<sup>143</sup>Belleville, 'Continuity', pp. 19-21, sees the entire letter contents prefigured in the thanksgiving: speech=chapters 1-4; knowledge=chapters 5-10(11); spiritual gifts=chapters 12-14; day of our Lord=chapter 15. Chance, 'Paul's Apology', pp. 148-50, notes the topics, speech, knowledge, charismata, and koinonia introduced here are main topics of the letter; Mitchel, *Paul*, p. 194, notes the



introduce the entire contents of the letter, the thanksgiving establishes the contours of the discussion which follows. It sets the tone and lays the foundation for the letter-body, including introducing some themes which will be expanded upon in the letter-body.<sup>144</sup>

As noted above, the two topics which are emphasized grammatically are God's grace and God's faithfulness. Stemming from the grace of God are the related themes of spiritual enrichment, the gifts of speech and knowledge, being confirmed in the gospel, being spiritually gifted, awaiting the return of Christ, and being blameless. Stemming from God's faithfulness are the themes of being called, and fellowship with Jesus Christ. All of these themes are theocentrically grounded--they emanate from God's action; and are Christocentrically situated--they come from being 'in Christ'. Both of these aspects are larger latent themes in themselves. Some, but not all, of these themes receive further discussion in the letter-body. All of them work together to pave the way for the subsequent discussion by suggesting the important theological premises of the ensuing discussion.

The thanksgiving as an introduction also attempts to secure the goodwill of the audience. Weiss commented that

---

introduction of key terms for the argument which follows; K.E. Bailey, 'The Structure of 1 Corinthians and Paul's Theological Method with Special Reference to 4:17', NovT 25 (1983), pp. 157-59, suggests that the content of the five major essays in the letter are indirectly referred to in the thanksgiving.

<sup>144</sup>O'Brien, Introductory, pp. 134-35, is correct in noting that some themes, but not all are prefigured in the thanksgiving.

the thanksgiving in 1 Corinthians is so impersonal and lacking in warmth, especially in comparison with the other Pauline thanksgivings, that if it was not so conventional to include one, the writer would most likely have omitted one.<sup>145</sup> Other commentators have suggested that the praise is ironic.<sup>146</sup> The rhetorical analyses see the listing of the spiritual qualities for which thanks to God is given as direct appeal to the audience.<sup>147</sup> The above suggestions, however, miss the point that the praise is directed to God and not specifically about the recipients. Any appeal to the goodwill of the audience is indirect.

While the thanksgiving is very circuitous and very circumspective in terms of its appeal to the audience, those who identify with the designated spiritual identity inscribed in the letter opening find themselves, 'enriched', 'confirmed', 'blameless', 'called', etc. This status is even described in hyperbole, 'in all things you were enriched' (v. 5); 'not wanting in any gift' (v. 7).<sup>148</sup> In a sense, the favour of the audience is wooed by the resplendent description of their spiritual status. But the indirect manner of this praise makes the appeal to the audience less forceful.

---

<sup>145</sup>Weiss, Korinther, p. 6.

<sup>146</sup>See the references in footnote 140.

<sup>147</sup>See references in footnote 143.

<sup>148</sup>Betz, 'Rhetoric and Theology', pp. 26-34, suggests and examines these words as if Paul is quoting the claim of the Corinthians themselves, but in agreement with them; this is an unnecessary conclusion and an unprovable one.



In summary, the thanksgiving acts as an introduction to the main subject of the letter. The main subject the thanksgiving introduces is the spiritual identity of the readers. This identity is centred primarily on God's grace and God's faithfulness. The essential premise which the thanksgiving establishes is that the ideal spiritual identity of the readers is a consequence of God's action, and thus this identity as grounded in God's action encompasses the readers' past, present and future. By setting out the main subject and introducing some of the important themes and the major premise(s), the thanksgiving acts as the rhetorical introduction for what follows in the letter-body.

### 3.2.3. The Authorial Identity as Presented in the Thanksgiving

The presentation of the textual identity of the author or sender in the thanksgiving can be interpreted<sup>in</sup> several ways. Traditionally, the historical-critical method has read the thanksgiving as a explicit correction of the theological problems which were present in the Corinthian church. For example, Fee has exegeted the thanksgiving as follows: 'His [Paul's] concern here is to redirect their focus--from themselves to God and Christ and from an over-realized eschatology to a healthy awareness of the glory that is still future'.<sup>149</sup> This understanding presupposes that the audience was aware of the problem from the perspective of the author, i.e. that they knew 'Paul' considered their theology as self-directed over-realized

---

<sup>149</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 46.

eschatology. This is also an interpretive conclusion based on the argument of the letter as a whole. At this point in the text, the situation as conveyed by the text is only beginning to emerge. The thanksgiving as introduction lays the foundation, sets the tone, establishes the contours for the discourse which follows. So rather than being theological correction, the thanksgiving seeks to establish the epistolary situation by defining the terms upon which the discussion will proceed.

The epistolary situation is partially constructed by the way the authorial identity is inscribed in the thanksgiving. That identity is based on the spiritual and relational perspective which the text asserts with respect to the recipients.

The spiritual and relational stance of the implied author asserted in the thanksgiving of 1 Cor. 1.4-9 is authoritative. This authority resides in the author's textual disclosure of a spiritual reality, the spiritual status of the readers, a disclosure based on the author's insight into the person and work of God on behalf of the readers through his agent, Jesus Christ. In addition, throughout the paragraph, a Christian ideological perspective is assumed and its mutuality is also assumed, 'our Lord Jesus Christ'. The spiritual ideology latent in the language used in the letter opening is conveyed through a rhetoric of power which requires the reader to assent and accept the assumed language and logic in order to remain a reader. The spiritual perspective declared by the sender in the thanksgiving is not open for discussion; it is



presented as a conclusion based on the author's exclusive knowledge about what God has done for the Corinthians. One commentator noted:

This paragraph is not didactic but allusive. It will be noticed throughout St. Paul's correspondence that the fundamentals of Christianity are assumed rather than stated: they were not called into question, but were common ground between the apostle and his correspondents. And it is clear from this paragraph that the doctrines of the divine Sonship of Christ, of His grace and spiritual gifts, of His second coming in judgement, and of the importance of the Church as the fellowship of the Son of God, had formed part of the teaching originally given by St. Paul to his converts.<sup>150</sup>

The important point recognized in this comment is the way that the specific doctrines are assumed to be understood. This assumption is explained by this commentator through an appeal to an historical event, the original teaching of the author to the Corinthians. The important rhetorical point, however, is not what happened on the sender's prior visit(s), but that the religious language assumes assent by the audience. The assumption creates a textual authority by imposing the common ground, the common ground being what the text actually declares, not what the sender may have taught in the past. There is no actual recall to any teaching, but only an implicit assumption that the reader would either understand the 'logic' of the text or accept it unquestionably.

The relational perspective rests upon a personal mutuality. First of all, the author and audience engage through the 'I' and 'you' language of the text. In addition, the author and audience share a common basis in

---

<sup>150</sup>Evans, Corinthians, p. 164.

an understanding of Jesus as Lord. Most importantly, the speaker and audience relate through the figure of God, specifically on the basis of the person and acts of God as described in the thanksgiving. It is the textually asserted understanding of the work of God which provides the common ground where the speaker and audience meet.

### 3.3. Summary

In the thanksgiving found in 1 Cor. 1.4-9, the readers find their conventional expectations thwarted in several respects. First, the traditional thanks for the personal and physical well-being of the recipients and sender is changed to spiritual matters about the recipients. In addition, and significantly, the relational perspective is subtly shifted. What is actually given thanks for is what God has done for the Corinthians. The effect of this is actually to depersonalized the relational perspective by distancing and objectifying the audience. The audience, rather than finding a mutual exchange of personal data, finds a descriptive discussion about itself. Finally, the temporal perspective in the thanksgiving is all inclusive, discussing spiritual 'facts' which pertain to the readers identity in the past, present, and future. It is especially this future perspective which is unconventional for an epistolary thanksgiving.

These shifts contribute to the textual authority operative in the thanksgiving. The textual authority is primarily a product of the assertive discourse which appears as logical argument. The rhetorical device could be labelled disclosure. The assertive disclosure and the



hidden logic and definitions, requires the audience to enter into that spiritual perspective which is presupposed behind the language and into that spiritual reality which is selectively disclosed and posited as the identity for the audience.

Conventionally, the thanksgiving of ancient letters telegraphed items for further discussion. Instead of a personal, more intimate thanksgiving, the thanksgiving of 1 Cor. 1.4-9 presents a formal foundation or introduction by positing a spiritual and relational perspective. The author presents his primary subject matter as the spiritual status of the readers which is specifically a product of God's grace and faithfulness. The specific aspects of that spiritual identity enumerated in the thanksgiving, like being enriched, confirmed in the Gospel, spiritually gifted, blameless, etc, serve as an introduction to a number of the themes or topics in the letter-body. All in all, the thanksgiving acts as a textual disclosure which becomes the common ground for the speaker and audience as the text moves into the letter body.

#### 4. Conclusion

The epistolary conventions employed in the opening of 1 Corinthians are important to establishing the contours of the epistolary situation. In the opening, the sender establishes his textual identity which will govern the relational context for the rest of the epistle. Equally, in the address, the sender posits the identity of the readers which they implicitly are enjoined to adopt for the sake of the letter's message or argument. In the case of 1

Corinthians, the sender adopts a personal yet official identity stressing his authoritative role in relation to the addressees through the use of the title, apostle, and by the emphasis on the divine origin of this functional role. The recipients are addressed as a community, a sacred community, and identified exclusively in spiritual terms, stressing their new religious identity as essentially 'in Christ'. This Christian spiritual identity is shared with the sender ('our Lord'), but works out in a functional distinction: he is an apostle, they are saints. The ramifications of the spiritual identity is spelled out in very specific ways, in terms of their 'sanctification', their 'calling', and their commonality with the larger Christian church.

In the greeting the religious and spiritual emphasis is again highlighted and affirmed. The greeting is a spiritual greeting wishing them God's grace and peace, not merely good-health.

The thanksgiving continues the opening, extending the sender's effort to establish the epistolary situation. It is in the thanksgiving that the religious and relational premises are clarified. Again, this is set out in Christian terms. The thanksgiving of 1 Corinthians is distinctive in that the language and argumentation makes it a discussion about the recipients, rather than an appeal to pathos with respect to the audience. The spiritual premises which are emphasized are the grace of God and God's faithfulness. It is these two 'acts' of God through



Christ which are the foundation for the spiritual identity of the recipients enumerated in the thanksgiving.

The opening of 1 Corinthians is a distinctive spiritual, Christian, adaptation of Greek epistolary practice. The spiritual revamping of the convention establishes a religious rhetoric of authority and disclosure. This religious rhetoric means the relational tone and ideological premises are asserted or declared, rather than argued, and assent on the readers' part is assumed as the basis for the epistolary situation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE RHETORIC OF THE LETTER CLOSING:

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 16.19-24

##### 1. Introduction

In this chapter, the rhetoric of the letter closing of 1 Corinthians is examined. As discussed in chapter three, Pauline letter closings are similar to Greek letter closings in form and function. Pauline letter closings exhibit a variety of closing elements in varying sequences so that it is not always clear when the letter body ends and the formal letter closing begins. However, as established in chapter three, the final greetings and the 'grace' benediction provide the essential features of the Pauline closing.<sup>1</sup>

Letter closings in conventional Greek friendly or familial letters, as discussed in chapter three, traditionally concluded with a simple word, ἔρωσο, or with an extended ἔρωσο clause, which functioned as a health-wish and as a 'good-bye'. Sometimes a health wish formula was added independent of and in addition to the ἔρωσο closing. It was not uncommon for the 'farewell' to be preceded by personal greetings. As the closing ended the contact between the letter parties initiated by the letter, it was not uncommon that some form of 'visit talk' or a

---

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.3.1.



rehearsal of the personal plans of the writer preceded the letter closing. Some family letters included expressions of concern for the welfare of the writer's family in the closing.

As also discussed in chapter three, the epistolary function of the Greek letter closing was to maintain contact or perpetuate the relationship between the letter parties. Letter closings like letter openings were essentially personal or philophronetic. However, besides maintaining contact, the letter closing also functioned as a restatement of the letter's purpose, reinforcing the letter's message or purpose as indicated in the body of the letter. This fact is illustrated by Greek family letters whose purpose was mainly to communicate about the sender's well-being or enquire about the well-being of the addressee(s), in these ~~letters~~ letters the closing emphasized the health-wish and other the expressions of familial concern.

As an essential part of the epistolary discourse, the closing has a rhetorical function directly related to its epistolary function. The status of being the 'final remarks' gives the closing an emphatic nature. Through the use of epistolary convention and the creative adaptation of convention, the closing provides the sender with a final opportunity to reinforce or assert the relational and communication or dialogical context for the whole letter.

The formal letter closing in 1 Cor. 16.19-24 is signalled by the introduction of the greetings, specifically by the standard greeting, ἀσπάζονται, in v.

19.<sup>2</sup> The letter closing has several distinct elements. First is the ~~the~~ closing greetings, which are in two parts, the secondary greetings (vv. 19-20a) and the holy kiss formula (v. 20b). The greetings are followed by a signature statement which contains the signature greeting (v. 21) and an epistolary summary or concluding injunction (v. 22). The letter closing ends with the conventional Pauline 'grace' benediction (v. 23) followed by a post-script like personal expression of love (v. 24).

The letter closing of 1 Corinthians will be discussed according to the three main closing features found in 1 Cor. 16.19-24: (1) closing greetings, (2) signature statement, and (3) 'grace' benediction. Each of the

---

<sup>2</sup>Commentators differ as to the way the letter concludes. Many commentators see chapter 16 as the letter conclusion, but separate out vv. 19-24 as a distinction sub-section: Weiss, Korintherbrief, pp. 380-87, vv. 19-20, Grüße; vv. 21-24, Eingenhändiger Schluß des Paulus; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, pp. 161-62, vv. 19-24, final greetings and benediction; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 833-40, vv. 19-24, final greetings; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, vv. 19-24, concluding salutations; Klauck, 1 Korintherbrief, pp. 126-27, vv. 19-24, Schlußgrüße; C. Wolff, Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther, Zweiter Teil; Auslegung der Kapitel 8-16, THKNT 7/2 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1975), pp. 226-30, vv. 19-24, Grüße und Schlußwünsche. Compare, however, Barrett, 1 Corinthians, pp. 392-99, vv. 13-24, last words to the church and greetings; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 141, vv. 15-20, recommendations and greetings; vv. 21-24, farewell charges; Lang, Korinther, pp. 248-50, vv. 13-24, Ermahnungen und Grüße. Strangely, Mitchell, Paul, pp. 291-295, calls chapter 16.1-24 the epistolary closing, however, it is not necessary to say that the whole of chapter 16 is the epistolary closing. It is clear that given epistolary practice the letter of 1 Corinthians does not formally close until the greetings commence in v. 19. With regard to Pauline epistolary practice the relationship of 16.1-18 to the letter-body and the letter-closing is more ambiguous. As Mitchell notes, 16.13-18 is a distinct section which recapitulates the argument of the letter-body, thus it seems more logical to see the formal epistolary closing beginning with v. 19, with 16.1-18 as part of the letter-body closing.



closing elements will be examined to see how they contribute to the rhetoric of the letter by conveying the relational and religious perspective for the epistolary situation of the letter and by reinforcing the epistolary purpose of the letter. As in chapter four, each epistolary element will be read with respect to the authorial perspective and with respect to the audience perspective.

## 2. The Closing Greetings: 16.19-20

The final greetings signal the formal closing section of 1 Corinthians (16:19-20). While there is debate over the way 1 Corinthians is closed as a letter, the transition from the letter-body closing to the formal epistolary closing appears obvious by the abrupt break or disjunction between v. 18 and v. 19.

Immediately preceding the greetings, the letter body of 1 Corinthians concludes with familiar Pauline style. First, there is the 'visit talk' topos (16:5-11), which is related within the discussion regarding the collection (16.1).<sup>3</sup> The 'visit talk' serves both to inform the readers about the sender's movements with respect to the collection and to inform the readers about the sender's future visit in order to 'follow-up' the letter, what has

---

<sup>3</sup>This division follows Fee, Corinthians, pp. 817-833. The issue is whether v. 12 is a separate matter or part of the 'visit talk'. It is not crucial where the division is made unless one interprets the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  of 16.12 as referring to a specific question in the letter from the Corinthians to which Paul is replying. But the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  certainly signals a new topic no matter whether one takes it as a reference to a Corinthian question, contra Mitchell, Paul, pp. 291-93.

been called the 'Apostolic parousia'.<sup>4</sup> Next comes the final letter topic (16.12), the question concerning Apollos, signalled by the *περὶ δέ* convention.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, the letter body concludes with hortatory remarks. One set (16.13-14) reinforces the essential letter message and purpose.<sup>6</sup> A second set (16.15-18), cast in a concluding *παρακαλῶ* formula, provides instruction regarding the mechanics of the relational basis between the sender and the addressees which is directly linked to the house of Stephanas, and which also undergirds the authority of the letter carrier(s).<sup>7</sup>

The closing greetings in 1 Corinthians have two parts. The first part contains the secondary third-person greetings in which parties other than the sender convey greetings to the letter recipients. The second part contains the holy kiss greeting formula.

### 2.1. The Secondary Greetings

The secondary greetings in 1 Corinthians 16:19-20a are all third-person type greetings from a third-party to the letter recipients. There are three greetings: Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας. ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ

---

<sup>4</sup>Funk, 'The Apostolic Parousia', pp. 249-68; also, White, 'St. Paul', pp. 440-42; Belleville, 'Continuity', pp. 32-33. However, the more correct assessment of visit talk as a *topos* is Mullins, 'Visit Talk', pp. 350-58.

<sup>5</sup>Mitchell, 'Concerning', p. 256.

<sup>6</sup>So Mitchell, *Paul*, p. 294; Wuellner, 'Greek Rhetoric', p. 183, notes how these verses are a recapitulation of 1.10, the letter-body's opening statement of purpose.

<sup>7</sup>Fee, *Corinthians*, pp. 832-33. On the recommendation of Stephanas in 16.17-18, see Chow, *Patronage*, pp. 96-98.



Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκα σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πάντες. All of the greetings are from groups: (a) the churches of Asia, (b) Aquila and Prisca with the church that meets in their house, and (c) all the brothers. The syntax or form of the greetings is stereotypical with each greeting having the following form: (1) begins with a third-person indicative verb of greeting, ἀσπάζονται, (2) names the party greeted, in all three cases, ὑμᾶς, and (3) names the greeting party.<sup>8</sup> The second greeting contains an elaborating phrase, ἐν κυρίῳ πολλὰ, which precedes the naming of the group doing the greeting.

#### 2.1.1. The Authorial Perspective

One rhetorical aspect of the secondary greetings in 1 Corinthians with respect to the letter author or sender is the absence of any direct or explicit authorial self-presentation. The sender exchanges no secondary greetings. No member of the Corinthian church is greeted, nor is any visiting emissary greeted by the sender. The author is present only as the agent through which three third-party groups greet the letter recipients.<sup>9</sup>

What is peculiar is how the author in conveying these community greetings sets himself apart from these three groups. Through such relational posturing, the author asserts an authoritative stance much like an omniscient narrator.<sup>10</sup> Greetings from the churches of an entire

---

<sup>8</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', pp. 418-19.

<sup>9</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', p. 421.

<sup>10</sup>Chatman, Story, pp. 211-15; Sternberg, Poetics, pp. 12-13, *passim*.

province (αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας) are unique to 1 Corinthians. The author has already revealed that he writes from Ephesus (16.8). Now, he acts as spokesperson for the churches of Asia outside of the city of Ephesus, implying that he is in communication with these churches. As spokesperson, the author presents himself as someone with comprehensive insight. Even the designation, αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας, conveys the author's conception of a geographical and ecclesiastical whole--the designation itself creates and establishes the entity for the epistolary situation.<sup>11</sup>

As found in the letter opening (1.2), the closing greetings posit an authorial concept of solidarity and unity between the recipients and the larger church community. By creating the designation, 'the churches of Asia', and by acting as their greeting agent, the speaker furthers the relational ideal--the fellowship of all the churches, an ideal which the letter seeks to establish.<sup>12</sup> Affirming this solidarity between the churches has been the rhetorical basis for compelling the recipients to act according to some of the letter's suggested actions (11.16; 14.33b; 16.1).

---

<sup>11</sup>The specific area the geographical reference, Ἀσίας, refers to is ambiguous: Fee, Corinthians, p. 835: 'One cannot tell from such language, of course, how much of the province this entails'. Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 397: 'Elsewhere the Apostle mentions 'Asia' thrice (2 Cor. i.8; Rom. xvi.5; 2 Tim. i.15), and in all places it is the Roman province that is meant; but the Roman province was not always accurately defined and was used in more than one sense'.

<sup>12</sup>Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 36; Gamble, Textual, p. 75.



The second greeting party, 'Aquila and Prisca together with the church which meets at their house', is a specific example of the previous general designation. This designation represents a narrowing of the geographical range implicit in the preceding greeting, from the provincial churches outside Ephesus to a specific church in Ephesus.<sup>13</sup> There seems to be a deliberate effort in this greeting to provide a communal greeting by the addition of the *σύν* prepositional phrase to the primary greeting party, Aquila and Prisca. The relationship of the sender to this named party is not provided by the letter and all that can be deduced is the sender's special knowledge of their desire to send greetings. Commentators speculate that this was the church which the sender attended;<sup>14</sup> however, the emphasis is not on the author's relationship to this third-party, but on the audience's relationship, *ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς*.

The author recognizes a special relationship between this party and the recipients, both by the fact that it is the only greeting party specifically named and by the fact that the greeting conveyed is personalized or elaborated, *ἐν κυρίῳ πολλᾶ*. The elaboration of the greeting by the use of *πολλᾶ* would convey an affectionate familial greeting.<sup>15</sup> The use of *ἐν κυρίῳ* would convey a specifically Christian

---

<sup>13</sup>Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, pp. 364-65; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 397.

<sup>14</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 835.

<sup>15</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', p. 422: 'It is intended to intensify the warmth of the greeting'; Gamble, Textual, p. 60.

context for the familial setting.<sup>16</sup> Thus, another relational ideal common to the letter is affirmed by the speaker: relationships between fellow Christians have familial overtones.

Following on, the author speaks for the third party, 'all the brothers'. Who this group is in relation to the speaker is difficult to determine.<sup>17</sup> 'Brother' as used in the letter opening is a title distinct from the title for the sender, 'apostle', and from the title for the recipients, 'saints'. That 'the brothers' represent a group of Christians is implied by the familial terminology.<sup>18</sup> Using familial language in a greeting convention recalls the mostly familial greetings found in the typical Greek family letters.

In summary, in the secondary greetings of 1 Corinthians, the authorial figure is absent in terms of explicit self-presentation. He acts as the hidden 'literary agent' in order to convey greetings from third-parties to the letter recipients. But the speaker's textual presence is very discernable. Two important relational perspectives are explicitly affirmed through the greetings: (1) the unity of all the churches, and (2) the familial concept of Christian relationships. The speaker's

---

<sup>16</sup>Grosheide, Corinthians, p. 405; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 398; Wolff, Korinther, p. 227.

<sup>17</sup>The rest of the churches/Christians in Ephesus, Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 398; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396; cf. Weiss, Korintherbrief, pp. 386-87, all the Christians from Corinth in Ephesus. Fee, Corinthians, p. 830, suggests that it refers to Pauline co-workers and companions; Wolff, Korinther, p. 228.

<sup>18</sup>See Chapter Four, section 2.1.



authoritative stance or status is implied by the speaker's role as the specially informed spokesperson for the different communities which the speaker creates by his textual designations and distinctions. Further, the religious perspective is evident in the way the greeting convention is altered and made communal, ecclesiastical, and Christian.

### 2.1.2. The Audience Perspective

The nature of secondary greetings in letter closings is relational. It is to communicate and exchange contact or friendship via the epistolary convention of greetings.<sup>19</sup> The secondary greetings in 1 Corinthians explicitly focus on the relationship between the letter recipients and the three different named third-parties. If one begins to examine the relationship which exists between these four parties, the rhetorical effect of these greetings with respect to the audience can be discerned.

In all three greetings found in 1 Cor. 16.19-20a, the audience, those designated by the *ὑμᾶς*, is the constant and determinate party. But exactly who does the *ὑμᾶς* refer to? According to the letter opening, the addressee is 'the church of God which is at Corinth'. This designation is a literary abstraction created by the sender to specify a single, whole entity composed of 'those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints or holy' (1.2). Most likely, this 'church' is composed of many different

---

<sup>19</sup>See Chapter Two, section 3.5.2.1.

churches, or at least many different house congregations.<sup>20</sup> In the letter closing, this abstract designation is the recipient of friendship contact, that is greetings from three groups with which it supposedly has some kind of personal relationship.

When the first party, 'the churches of Asia', is considered, the personal relationship which exists between the church at Corinth and the churches of Asia seems more like a literary construct. 'The churches of Asia' is itself an abstract designation. It is not actually possible for the church of Corinth to have a physical, personal relationship, the kind of relationship implied in the conventional epistolary greetings, with the churches of Asia. It is even unlikely that the geographical designation, 'Ἀσίας', would have been specifically understood by the audience since it could refer to several different geographical locations all in the same area.<sup>21</sup>

Through a speech-act,<sup>22</sup> that of greeting, the speaker brings together two abstract, literary figures, the church in Corinth and the churches of Asia. The greeting convention creates a literary situation in which two parties who are literary constructs are designated as

---

<sup>20</sup>Meeks, First, pp. 108-09; F.V. Filson, 'The Significance of the Early House Churches', JBL 56 (1939), pp. 105-12; Malherbe, Social Aspects, pp. 60-91; R. Banks, Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Setting (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), pp. 31-42.

<sup>21</sup>See above, footnote 11.

<sup>22</sup>The concept of a speech act is discussed in J.R. Searle, Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); see also C. White, ed., Speech Act Theory and Biblical Criticism, Semeia, 41 (Decatur: Scholars Press, 1988).



having a friendly, personal relationship. The absurd and unanswerable question illustrates the point, did all (or merely some) of the churches in Asia actually ask the letter author to express an epistolary greeting to the church (house-churches) in Corinth based on a personal, physical acquaintance?

The conveyance of greetings by the sender to the letter recipients from another community creates a sense of solidarity, unity, and fellowship between two large 'church' communities. Through the construction of a greeting situation which is purely textual, the concept of community which is an essential aspect of the letter message is reinforced. This concept of community is based on the implicit religious and theological perspectives operative in the letter: as communities of fellow-christians, churches are automatically united with each other with all the relational implications and obligations that relationship entails.

In the second greeting conveyed to the letter recipients, the convention moves from the abstract to the concrete. The named third-party, 'Aquila and Prisca along with the church meeting in their house', is not as abstract an entity.<sup>23</sup> It is possible that there were actual links between this third-party and the recipients. While this party is also a group or church community, the crucial component is Aquila and Prisca as is evident by the use of

---

<sup>23</sup>The narrative history of the relationship between Aquila and Prisca and Paul is related in Acts 18.2-3, 18, 19. 'The church which meets in their house' is a reference to a specific house church, Fee, Corinthians, p. 835.

the third-person singular greeting verb, ἀσπάζεται, and by the subordinate expansion of the subject with the σὺν prepositional phrase.<sup>24</sup> While the letter sheds no light on the origin or foundation of the relationship between the church in Corinth and Aquila and Prisca, by implication some relationship exists already. The elaboration of the greeting with the use of πολλὰ suggests a degree of affection in the greeting.<sup>25</sup>

It is probable that this specific, personal third-party greeting serves to illustrate the abstract nature of the previous greeting for the audience. As the relationship is expanded to include the church which meets in Aquila and Prisca's house, the audience is given a specific church to identify with even if the contact is only through the church-hosts or leaders. The greeting is kept on a spiritual plane or within a Christian context by the expression ἐν κυρίῳ. This is a common expression in the letter used to specify one of the primary religious relational perspectives in the letter.<sup>26</sup>

The greeting from 'all the brothers' proves a difficult case in terms of discerning the relationship between the greeting parties implied by the greeting. As noted above, 'the brothers' denotes a familial concept

---

<sup>24</sup>The singular verb may represent that the two persons are perceived as a single entity, BDF, §135.

<sup>25</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', p. 422.

<sup>26</sup>For example 4.17, 'on account of this, I sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church'; also 7.22, 39; 9.1; 11.11.



operative within the Christian community. But who are these brothers in relation to the Corinthian church? Are they (1) Pauline co-workers,<sup>27</sup> (2) Corinthian church members visiting in Ephesus and/or visiting Paul,<sup>28</sup> (3) all the other Christians in Ephesus besides the ones that meet at Aquila and Prisca's house,<sup>29</sup> (4) the Christians in Ephesus whom the Corinthians knew,<sup>30</sup> or (5) a redundant restatement and expansion of v. 19a?<sup>31</sup> Whatever the expression specifically designated, it probably had some significance to the readers. If it was an official designation, Pauline co-workers are probably in view; if it is an informal designation of Christians known to many of the Corinthians, (2) or (4) is likely. Through this third greeting, the Christian community at Corinth finds itself in relationship with some ambiguous faction of the wider Christian family designated as 'the brothers'.

In summary, through these secondary greetings, the audience, the Christian church in Corinth, is placed in relationship with the larger church and the wider Christian family. The use of the epistolary greeting convention makes the relationships appear personal and familial. The

---

<sup>27</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 836; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 161; Wolff, Korinther, p. 228.

<sup>28</sup>Weiss, Korintherbrief, p. 386-87; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396, suggests this as the alternative to his view.

<sup>29</sup>Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 398; Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, p. 365; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396, his preferred view; Lang, Korinther, p. 249.

<sup>30</sup>Grosheide, Corinthians, p. 405.

<sup>31</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 836, suggests this as a possibility, but prefers (1).

text designates the four parties and designates both the fact of the relationship and the nature of the relationship. The rhetorical effect of the use and adaptation of the greeting convention is to assert a theological concept of spiritual and ecclesiastical unity which the audience is obliged to accept and participate in order to remain within the world of the text.

## 2.2. The Holy Kiss Greeting Formula

As discussed in chapter three, the 'holy kiss' greeting is formulaic in the authentic Pauline letters: ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.<sup>32</sup> In 1 Cor. 16.20b, as in most other Pauline usages, the epistolary context for the formula is the closing greetings. Furthermore, the formula as it appears in 1 Cor. 16.20b utilizes the conventional greeting form: (1) the greeting verb, and (2) the persons greeted: Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ.<sup>33</sup> Based on this context and the form, the holy-kiss formula serves an epistolary function as a form of greeting in 1 Corinthians.

### 2.2.1. The Authorial Perspective

The holy kiss formula represents another distinctive use and adaptation of epistolary convention by the sender. In this use of the greeting form no greetings are exchanged between two parties. The greeting recognizes the community nature of the addressee(s) and calls upon that community to

---

<sup>32</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.3.4.2.

<sup>33</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', pp. 418-19.



demonstrate the nature of Christian fellowship which is exemplified in the preceding secondary greetings.

The switch in the verb mood from the indicative to the imperative calls the audience to action. It is not necessarily an authoritative command as much as a request with implicit expectations from the speaker's viewpoint.<sup>34</sup> The audience is expected to perform, but not required. The formulaic expression and the regular use of the expression in the Pauline letters implies that it is a custom and hence a reasonable request.<sup>35</sup> Though the act may be customary, the location of this request in the letter's closing greetings would be unprecedented in ancient epistolary literature.

The kiss is *ἀγίος*. This qualification sets it apart from the common social custom of greeting in the hellenistic world and denotes its religious and Christian character, thus maintaining the religious or ideological perspective of the epistle.

The enjoined act is not an expression of the author's greeting or 'the salutation he would have given them all had he been present'.<sup>36</sup> The authorial greeting follows in v. 21. The speaker instead asks the letter recipients to act out the spiritual and relational understanding of community entextualized in the preceding secondary

---

<sup>34</sup>On this understanding of the imperative, see Porter, Verbal Aspect, pp. 335-60.

<sup>35</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 836; Gamble, Textual, p. 76.

<sup>36</sup>As stated in Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396.

greetings.<sup>37</sup> This partly explains its function in the closing of 1 Corinthians. As a Pauline convention, the formula calls upon the audience to enact in a formal and tangible way the concept of Christian fellowship.<sup>38</sup> In this sense, the letter calls upon the letter recipients to express their unity and their familial relationships at the end of the epistolary instruction. The holy kiss greeting calls for the audience to express, participate in, and fulfil the religious relational ideal engendered in the letter: the Christian community.

#### 2.2.2. The Audience Perspective

The audience perspective depends on whether the holy kiss greeting conveys a custom or something extraordinary. As noted above, the formula seems to imply a custom, if only by the simple fact that the speaker does not explain its significance. However, by re-contextualizing the custom as an epistolary greeting and placing it at the end of the letter gives the act possible new significance.

The audience is faced with a decision at this point in the letter. To do as requested is to affirm and enact the concept of unity and community as expressed in the secondary greetings immediately preceding and as alluded to throughout the letter. The unity encouraged by the kiss act is a unity within the community designated as the letter recipients and a unity with the third-party

---

<sup>37</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 836: 'the special relationship that believers had to one another as the family of God'; Klassen, 'Sacred Kiss', pp. 134-35.

<sup>38</sup>Gamble, Textual, p. 76; Klassen, 'Sacred Kiss', p. 134; Banks, Idea, p. 88.



communities named in the secondary greetings. The use of ἀλλήλους for the party greeted emphasizes the unity expected within the immediate community<sup>1</sup> of the addressees. This congregational unity expressed through the holy kiss act then becomes a specific example of the inter-community unity portrayed in the secondary greetings.

The fact that this communal act comes at the end of the letter suggests it might ask the community to endorse more than the concept of Christian fellowship or community expounded in the letter. The holy kiss formula as an adaptation of the epistolary greeting convention also possibly entreats the audience to affirm the letter message and purpose. To perform this Christian greeting is to submit to the text and to identify with the role or identity created for the audience in the letter. In a sense, the performance of the act is a symbolic capitulation by the audience to accept the relationship the author seeks to create and maintain by and through the entire epistle.

### 2.3. Summary

The rhetorical effect of the secondary greetings in the letter closing of 1 Corinthians is to affirm and recapitulate in an emphatic way the concept of the Christian community and the Christian family set forth in the epistle. The closing secondary greetings, in that sense, reaffirms the relational perspective and the religious values asserted throughout the letter. But there is little argument to persuade; instead through the manipulation of epistolary convention, the greetings assert

as fact the religious and relational ideals which the letter seeks to promote.

In one sense, the adaptation of the greeting convention is a power-play. The greetings are a form of friendly letter discourse. In the greetings, four textually designated entities are placed into a friendly, but Christian, familial relationship. As a result, the audience must either accept these literary relationships as part of their identity or reject them and thus step outside the sender-recipient relationship which the letter inscribes.

To seal this textual power-play, the audience is asked to perform a customary act, the communal holy kiss. By this communal act, performed at the close of the reading of the epistle, the audience is called upon to enact, create, and participate in the concept of the Christian community and family expounded in the greetings and in the letter as a whole. Again, the transformation of an epistolary convention and of a community custom provokes the adherence of the audience to the theses that are presented for their assent. This is the rhetoric of power, not the rhetoric of argumentation.

### 3. The Signature Statement: 16.21-22

The signature statement in 1 Corinthians 16.21-22 forms the second part of the letter closing. 1 Corinthians is the only Pauline letter where the signature statement is part of the letter closing. The statement is as follows:

Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου. εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον  
ἡτῶ ἀνάθεμα. μαρὰνα θά. the apostle's signature is the conclusion of the letter, the only one of its kind in the Pauline corpus. The word 'ἀνάθεμα' (anathema) is a curse, and 'μαρὰνα θά' (marana tha) is a cry of longing for the Lord's return.



There are several aspects of the signature statement in 1 Corinthians which makes it different from the autographic conclusions found in official and friendly Greco-Roman letters. First, the change in handwriting is explicitly mentioned. Second, the signature statement is also a greeting. Third, the signature is a name signature. Fourth, the signature statement includes a terse command statement. The discussion below will examine the implications of these features. In addition, in examining the signature statement of 1 Corinthians, the matter of its length and function also will be considered.

The discussion will look at each part of the signature statement, (1) the signature greeting (v. 21), 'Ο ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, and (2) the concluding injunction or epistolary summary (v. 22), εἰ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον ἦτω ἀνάθεμα. μαράνα θά, and evaluate the rhetorical nature of each.

### 3.1. The Signature Greeting

Technically speaking, there is nothing to separate the signature statement from the secondary greetings which precede. The main point of the sentence is a greeting, ὁ ἀσπασμὸς. However, the explicit statement that the named sender is now writing in his own hand signals an autographic conclusion.<sup>39</sup> This combination of an autographic conclusion with the greeting convention

---

<sup>39</sup>What is so explicit is the inclusion of the phrase, τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ. This may be a recognition of the oral context for the reading of the epistle.

provides another interesting rhetorical moment in the epistolary conventions found in 1 Corinthians.

### 3.1.1. The Authorial Perspective

In comparison with the previous section where the author's self-presentation is limited to that of the agent conveying third-party greetings to the letter recipients, this section is rife with overt authorial self-presentation. In fact, within the epistolary convention, this may be the most overt authorial presentation in the letter if the claim that the author picks up the pen is accurate.<sup>40</sup> What occurs at this juncture in the letter is not only the transmission of the speaker's words and ideas, but a physical demonstration of the author's personhood expressed by his own handwriting. The contrast implied in the instrumental dative, *τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ* is important. The reader and the listening audience would be 'jolted' from the routine epistolary situation by the explicit and unconventional indication of the switch from the amanuensis's handwriting to the author's own hand.

The change in the epistolary situation is highlighted not only by the change to the autographic mode, but also by the fact that this change occurs in the greeting convention. The change in context which occurs at this point in the letter includes the change from third-person

---

<sup>40</sup>There is no reason to suspect otherwise. The original letter would have had direct evidence from the change in handwriting; but only the reader(s) would have seen this immediately. The issue is complicated by 2 Thess. 3.17 and Col. 4.18 which are often regarded as pseudo-Pauline letters. The implications of the handwriting change is difficult to assess with respect to the issue of pseudepigraphy.



greetings to a first-person greeting. Verse 22 is an epistolary greeting: 'Ο ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, literally, 'the greeting is with my own hand, Paul's', or more idiomatically, 'I, Paul, greet you in my own hand'.<sup>41</sup> This specific form of a first-person epistolary greeting is found only in the Pauline literature (1 Cor. 16.21; 2 Thess 3.17; Col. 4.18).<sup>42</sup> The very novelty of this would capture the audience's attention. The two changes, the change in handwriting and the change to a first-person greeting, bring the author to the forefront of the epistolary situation.

There is some question as to whether, ὁ ἀσπασμὸς, is a greeting, with the suggestion that it is only a signature statement and that the ὁ of ὁ ἀσπασμὸς refers to what follows the signature statement, specifically vv. 23-24.<sup>43</sup> If this were the case then the signature statement acts like a title to what follows and is not in itself a personal greeting from Paul.<sup>44</sup> But it is more probable that the signature statement serves a dual purpose: it is a first-person greeting with the article particularizing the greeting ('this greeting'), and it is an explicit signal of

---

<sup>41</sup>For various translations, see Gamble, Textual, p. 74; Fee, Corinthians, p. 836; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 399.; Grosheide, Corinthians, p. 405-06.

<sup>42</sup>The word, ἀσπασμὸς, is rare in ancient literature. Compare Gal. 6.11 and Phlm 19, though these signature statements are not greetings.

<sup>43</sup>Roller, Formular, pp. 70, 165-66.

<sup>44</sup>Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, pp. 365-67. However, compare the comments by Lightfoot, Notes, pp. 135-36.

the switch in the letter to the autograph mode.<sup>45</sup> The greeting function is supported by the context of the secondary greetings. The problem is that there are no extant examples of concluding autographs which explicitly comment on the change in script, and which use the nominative, ἀσπασμὸς.

One effect of this overt authorial self-presentation is that the epistolary relationship between the letter parties is brought into bold-relief. The fact that the conventional autographic mode is used to convey a greeting, a novel epistolary practice, invests the greeting with friendly, personal overtones.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the greeting from the sender to the letter recipients in the letter-closing is a repetition of the first epistolary greeting which occurs in the letter-opening, and this repetition is a rare epistolary practice.<sup>47</sup> The repetition of the sender's greeting reinforces the warm, personal relationship between the letter parties which the letter endeavours to establish from the opening and onwards.<sup>48</sup>

The intimacy of the repetition of the personal greeting, however, is slightly down-played by the syntax which, though a greeting, is not a stereotypical greeting

---

<sup>45</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 839; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 300; Aune, New Testament, p. 187.

<sup>46</sup>Grosheide, Corinthians, p. 406: 'The signature is also a token of love'; Gamble, Textual, p. 63; Koskenniemi, Studien zur Idee, pp. 168-69.

<sup>47</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', p. 420; Gamble, Textual, p. 59, 59n22.

<sup>48</sup>Mullins, 'Greetings', p. 420: 'It emphasizes the unusually friendly relationship between them'.



formula: (1) there is no verb of greeting, and (2) the person(s) greeted are not stated (in this case the absence of ὑμεῖς). Such syntax places emphasis on the greeting and on who offers it. In effect, the audience is de-emphasized. This becomes an example of a philophronetic convention being altered with the result that the mutual personal interaction of the convention is changed to highlight the sender's relational perspective. Still, one of the effects of the overt self-presentation in this signature greeting is to propound the close personal relationship between the sender and the letter recipients.

Another aspect of the authorial presentation is the use of a name signature, 'Ο ἀσπασμῶς...Παύλου, It is rare that any concluding autograph in friendly letters employ the sender's name.<sup>49</sup> But official and legal documents often had a name signature to authenticate and authoritatively endorse the contents of the letter-document.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps, the name is employed here to distinguish the autograph from the co-sender, Sosthenes. This would explain the use of the appositional genitive, Παύλου, which is thus added as a clarification to the ἐμῇ, to make sure the audience knew who the τῇ ἐμῇ referred to.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup>Gamble, Textual, p. 62, 62n37; Roller, Formular, pp. 493-98.

<sup>50</sup>Bahr, 'Subscriptions', pp. 21-44. White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1740-41, suggests the Pauline name signature statement acts like the illiteracy formula, but he does not explain how. The similarity is not obvious.

<sup>51</sup>Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 400.

One further effect of this strong authorial presentation is to attach the author's presence to the text. This gives the text the full personal endorsement of the sender and endows the text with the authority which the letter promotes for the sender. This has implications in two ways.

First, the repeated greeting is a strong reassertion of the sender's relationship to the text. The personal greeting in the autograph mode, while sending friendly signals, also authenticates the epistle as being from 'Paul'. The strong authorial presence at the end of the epistle reasserts the sender as the controlling figure in the letter dynamics.<sup>52</sup>

A second implication of this heightened authorial presentation is implied by the sentence which follows the signature greeting. While this sentence will be discussed in detail below, the combination of the strong self-presentation with the command of v. 22 establishes a tone of authority.<sup>53</sup> The effect of this is to create a direct confrontation between the letter parties without the amanuensis as an 'epistolary' intermediary. Placing the command in conjunction with the signature greeting places it directly under the auspices of the writer: 'The emphasis would be heightened by its location next to Paul's

---

<sup>52</sup>Wiles, Intercessory, p. 151n1: '...Paul's autograph signature endorsing and making binding all that had been written'.

<sup>53</sup>White, 'Epistolary Literature', pp. 1740-41, 'Paul intended his signature to convey his apostolic authority as well as his friendship'; C. Roetzel, Judgment in the Community (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), p. 162.



autograph signature'.<sup>54</sup> But more than that, the implication that this command is written by the hand of the sender himself gives the command heightened presence in the text.<sup>55</sup> The implication of the handwritten command is: 'while the rest of the epistle is dictated by me, take special note of what I write with my own hand'. The effect of the emphasized authorial presence and the heightened textual presence of the command conjures an aura of authority.

The relationship between the signature and the command statement raises the issue of how much of the remaining letter closing is written by the sender himself. Generally, where concluding autographs are employed, when the change in script occurs, the entire remaining letter closing was in the second hand or the sender's handwriting.<sup>56</sup> In which case, it is probable that the primary sender of 1 Corinthians, Paul, writes from v. 21 up to and including v. 24 in his own hand.<sup>57</sup>

To summarize, in terms of authorial presentation, the signature greeting of v. 21 is the most overt authorial self-presentation in the letter. An autographic conclusion

---

<sup>54</sup>Wiles, Intercessory, p. 151n1.

<sup>55</sup>Most likely the closing from v. 22 through v. 24 is by the hand of the sender, Paul.

<sup>56</sup>See the examples, White, Light, letters 89, 106a; and the comments by Gamble, Textual, pp. 62-64; Bahr, 'Subscriptions', pp. 32-33.

<sup>57</sup>Bahr, 'Subscriptions', p. 37, suggests much more is in the autograph conclusion, 16.15-24; but Bahr's conclusions are skewed by his argument that all the Pauline letters close with a formal epistolary subscription convention. See Gamble, Textual, p. 78n105, for a detailed refutation of Bahr.

is not necessarily unusual in Greek letters, whether in family or in official or in literary letters, but this Pauline autograph is unusual in several ways. First, the switch to the autographic mode is explicitly mentioned rather than being merely evident in the change in handwriting. Second, the autograph commences with a personal greeting rather than the farewell. Third, the signature greeting employs the sender's name, not unlike subscriptions in official letter-documents. The signature greeting emphasizes the close, personal relational perspective between the letter parties which the letter seeks to establish. But all that contributes to the authorial self-presentation also construes to emphasize the author's authority, with respect to the entire letter and especially to what is stated in the concluding autograph.

### 3.1.2. The Audience Perspective

As opposed to the secondary greetings, where the audience was the primary character in the text, the audience as a textual figure is absent from the signature greeting. It is the strong authorial self-presentation which confronts and constructs the implied audience. In most letters where there is a strong authorial self-presentation the implied audience response is a necessary regard for the role the text asserts for the author in that presentation.<sup>58</sup> In the case of 1 Corinthians, the audience is called to recognize the relational perspective implied

---

<sup>58</sup>This corresponds to the idea of a model or ideal reader in a letter, or the narrator/narratee relationship assumed in the text, Violi, 'Letters', pp. 151-52, 157-59.



by the text and the authority the sender asserts over the text and its message or purpose(s).

First, some mention needs to be made regarding the way v. 22 creates a heightened textual presence and defamiliarizes the audience response.<sup>59</sup> The signature greeting of 1 Corinthians is a creative epistolary feature in the letter closing. An autograph greeting, a second epistolary greeting from the sender to the recipients, and the deviation from the stereotypical greeting form--all these features demand the audience's attention to the text.

One aspect of the distinctive signature greeting which confronts the audience would be the strong relational overtones implied in the greeting. The relational implication of the repeated greeting and of the emphasis placed on the greeting by it being in the sender's own handwriting is of an unusually friendly rapport between the letter parties. The signature statement assumes a close personal relationship between the audience and the sender. In this sense, it conforms to the relational perspective of the letter, and as part of the closing, it suggests that this relational perspective results from acceptance of the letter's message or impact.

A second aspect regarding the signature greeting which confronts the reader is the authorial presence in the text created by the greeting and the autograph mode. The handwriting and the use of the name of the sender in the greeting encapsulates all the identities that the sender

---

<sup>59</sup>On the concepts of textual presence and defamiliarization, see Chapter Four, section 2.3.1.

has adopted in relation to the text. In 1 Corinthians, Paul, the sender, adopts several different relational roles (preacher, 1.17; builder, 3.10; servant, 4.1; father, 4.15), the chief role being the apostolic emissary of Christ Jesus (1.1; 9.1, 2, 5; 15.7, 9).<sup>60</sup> In the case of 1 Corinthians, the authorial figure presented to the audience in the text is an authoritative figure. Thus, the authorial presence, heightened by the autograph mode and the first-person greeting, implicitly demands a recognition by the audience of the authority attached to the person Paul throughout the letter.

With regard to the audience, the authorial self-presentation in the signature greeting is a form of textual persuasion. The reader confronted with a manipulation of the greeting convention and with the autograph mode in the letter-closing is presented with a reinforcement of the relational perspective and of the authorial figure which have been constructed in the letter. The audience once again must assent to this authorial self-presentation and all that it implies or step out of the world of the text.

### 3.2. The Concluding Injunction

Verse 22 of chapter 16 of 1 Corinthians, *εἰ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον ἢ τὸ ἀνάθεμα. μαράνα θά*, is perhaps one of the most enigmatic verses in the Pauline literature.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup>E. Best, Paul and His Converts (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), pp. 1-28, 29-58, 73-95; Shaw, Cost, pp. 65-69, 81-87, 96; Shütz, Paul, pp. 187-203; Holmberg, Paul and Power, pp. 87-89, 96, 117-20.

<sup>61</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 300, states regarding 16.22: 'striking in style and content'. The significant literature on this verse, Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 142-63;



Both its significance and its epistolary function are ambiguous.<sup>62</sup> The traditional critical recourse which seeks the origin of the text in order to solve the enigma has only multiplied the interpretative issues.<sup>63</sup> Though there are many exegetical questions related to the text, the particular focus of this discussion will be on its epistolary function and on the rhetorical effect of the text in the letter-closing of 1 Corinthians.

The first question then is whether the command in 1 Cor. 16:22 is a novel Pauline epistolary creation and functions as a liturgical enactment or as an apostolic command; or whether the command is an epistolary summary and functions as a kind of subscription? As noted previously, the concluding injunction is most likely written in the hand of the sender. This fact would be obvious to the reader by the change in script, it would be obvious to the listening audience by the explicit signature

---

Robinson, 'Traces', pp. 38-41; Bornkamm, Early, pp. 169-76; Moule, 'A Reconsideration', pp. 307-10.

<sup>62</sup>The issues with respect to significance depend on the meaning of: (1)  $\phi\lambda\epsilon\hat{\iota}$ , (2)  $\eta\tau\omega$ , (3)  $\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\mu\alpha$ , and (4) how  $\mu\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\ \theta\acute{\alpha}$  relates to the previous sentence. The issue with respect to function depends on whether the text is seen as: (1) a liturgical injunction, (2) as a command directed to specific opponents, or (3) as an element of the epistolary closing.

<sup>63</sup>i.e. W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, 'Two Texts in 1 Corinthians', NTS 16 (1969/70), pp. 271-76, suggest the text is a corrupt reading of an original Aramaic liturgy; C. Spicq, 'Comment Comprendre  $\phi\lambda\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$  dans 1 Cor. xvi.22?' NovT 1 (1956), pp. 200-04, holds that it is a quotation from the Aramaic; E. Käsemann, 'Sentences of Holy Law in the New Testament', in New Testament Questions of Today, trans. W.J. Montague (London: SCM, 1969), p. 69, regards the text as a sentence of Holy Law originating in eschatological prophecy.

statement. The effect of the sender giving a concluding command in his own hand must also be discussed.

The enigmatic meaning of this concluding injunction, the curious insertion of this command statement in the concluding autograph, the relationship of the injunction to the letter-body contents--all of these facets of the passage make it an interesting case for examining the rhetorical nature of this epistolary text.

### 3.2.1. The Authorial Perspective

One facet of the authorial self-presentation of the concluding injunction relates to the unique aspects of the text in comparison with the Pauline epistolary tradition. As discussed above, the context of the injunction is itself unique for this is the only letter of the seven authentic Pauline letters which has a signature greeting and an explicit signature statement in the letter-closing. In relation to this emphatic authorial self-presentation comes a Pauline injunction. As noted previously, there are two other authentic Pauline letters with concluding injunctions in the letter-closing; hence, with respect to the author, it is the wording of the injunction in 1 Cor. 16:22 that is distinctive.

In fact the wording of 1 Cor. 16:22 is so untypical in comparison with the Pauline epistolary literature that most commentators conclude that the text, or parts of the text, is a pre-Pauline liturgical formula.<sup>64</sup> While the

---

<sup>64</sup>A pre-pauline formula: Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396; Fee, Corinthians, p. 387; Roetzel, Judgment, p. 145. Specifically liturgical: Robinson, 'Traces', p. 157; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 150-55; Bornkamm, Early, pp. 169-76;



particular interpretative methodology used in this study is not directly concerned with determining the textual traditions in and behind the text, the fact that the text does have a number of distinctive features in its final form in comparison with the Pauline epistolary tradition and with the Pauline language in 1 Corinthians hints at some possible rhetorical implications with regard to the authorial self-presentation.

In the first instance, the text contains the only use of φιλέω in all the authentic Pauline letters.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the form of the εἰμι imperative, ἦτω, occurs only here in the Pauline letters.<sup>66</sup> In addition the word, μαράναθά, an Aramaic word transliterated into Greek, is a hapax legomenon in the New Testament writings.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the specific use of the word and concept for banning or cursing, ἀνάθεμα, is rare in the Pauline corpus (Rom. 9.3; 1 Cor. 12.3; 16.22; Gal. 1.8, 9).<sup>68</sup> The

---

Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, pp. 300-01; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 162.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. Titus 3.15 which is another example of the use of φιλέω in the Pauline corpus, but the action is directed toward other men, not God. Compare the use of ἀγαπάω for love of God, 1 Cor. 2.9; 8.3.

<sup>66</sup>Compare ἀνάθεμα ἔστω in Gal. 1.8, 9. For the use of ἦτω, compare James 5.12; for the grammar, BDF §98.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. Rev. 22.20 which probably a Greek translation of μαράναθά. On the meaning of the word, μαράναθά, see K.G. Kuhn, 'μαράναθά', TDNT IV, pp. 466-72. S. Schulz, 'Maranatha and Kyrios Jesus', ZNW 53 (1962), pp. 125-44; W. Dunphy, 'Maranatha: Development in Early Christology', ITQ 37 (1970), pp. 294-308; Moule, 'A Reconsideration', pp. 307-10.

<sup>68</sup>W.C. van Unnik, 'Jesus: Anathama or Kyrios (1 Cor. 12:33)?', in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, ed. B. Lindars and S.S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 113-26; J. Behm, 'ἀνάθεμα', TDNT I, pp.

collocation of three unique words and the rare use of *ἀνάθεμα* in one sentence suggests either that the author is borrowing language from another context<sup>69</sup> or that the author has written a unique lexical combination and possibly created a unique concept in his writings.<sup>70</sup> Whether or not the formulation is borrowed or a unique authorial construction, it seems that in relation to the Pauline epistolary tradition the sentence found in 1 Cor. 16:22 represents a carefully chosen and deliberate thought which specifically expresses the author's viewpoint in a concluding autograph.

The traditional critical conclusion is that this unique Pauline expression has its origin in the liturgical practice of the early Palestinian church and is therefore part of a liturgical sequence meant to be enacted by the readers at the conclusion of the epistle.<sup>71</sup> This conclusion fails to recognize the specific epistolary context and nature of the concluding elements.<sup>72</sup> The letter-closing is generally philophrnetic in function, and when a subscription is used, it authenticates and reinforces the letter message and purpose. This injunction falls within these two typical epistolary functions.

---

354ff.; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 135-55.

<sup>69</sup>See footnotes 63 and 64.

<sup>70</sup>The possibility that this text may be a unique Pauline construction is not found in any other commentator included in this study.

<sup>71</sup>Bornkamm, Early, pp. 169-76; Robinson, 'Traces', pp. 38-41; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 150-55.

<sup>72</sup>Gamble, Textual, pp. 143-44.



It is possible that the wording of the injunction finds its origin in the liturgy of the early church. It is possible that even if the wording is 'borrowed' a writer could adapt liturgical expressions for non-sacramental purposes like instruction.<sup>73</sup> However, the only concrete evidence that this text may come from a liturgical expression is the parallel text in Did. 10.6 which postdates 1 Corinthians.<sup>74</sup> If the expression has been borrowed, it has been adapted for its new epistolary context.

The specific implications of each of the unique features of the text with respect to the authorial self-presentation are difficult to evaluate. The choice of φιλέω may be a stylistic variation<sup>75</sup> or draw upon the same root as φίλημα in the holy kiss greeting in v. 20.<sup>76</sup> The semantics of the word do not warrant the conclusion that love of a different kind or degree is intimated by the unique occurrence as opposed to the routine use of

---

<sup>73</sup>Roetzel, Judgment, p. 147; Moule, 'A Reconsideration', pp. 307-10; Dunphy, 'Maranatha', p. 302.

<sup>74</sup>For a negative evaluation of the use of post-Christian literature to determine liturgical practice behind the New Testament text, see W.C. van Unnik, 'Dominus Vobiscum: The Background of a Liturgical Formula', in New Testament Essays, Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson, ed. A.J.B. Higgins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 270-272.

<sup>75</sup>W. Günther and H.-G. Link, 'Love', NIDNTT, II, p. 543.

<sup>76</sup>Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 400.

ἀγαπαῶ,<sup>77</sup> or that it is a technical term in distinction to the word, ἀγαπή.<sup>78</sup>

The unusual occurrence of the imperative form ἦτω, where the Pauline preference is ἔστω, might suggest an emphasis on the text as an adjuration or curse.<sup>79</sup> This imperative form is used as such in hellenistic inscriptions<sup>80</sup> and in the Septuagint.<sup>81</sup> But again, it is possible that it is merely a stylistic variation since the number of instances of the use of the εἰμι imperative is small in the authentic Pauline letters.<sup>82</sup>

The use of the word, μαρὰναθά, is curious. As noted above, it is an Aramaic word transliterated into Greek. K.G. Kuhn notes that the word probably stems from a congregation which spoke only Aramaic, mostly likely in Palestine, and attained such 'special significance and so fixed a form that it remained in the original Aramaic when adopted in Greek speaking congregations'.<sup>83</sup> The fact that

---

<sup>77</sup>Contra Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 400; and Grosheide, Corinthians, p. 406. So Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, p. 366.

<sup>78</sup>Spicq 'Comment', pp. 200-04; and Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396, who follows Spicq.

<sup>79</sup>BDF, §98; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 25, 116, 128.

<sup>80</sup>The manuscript evidence is cited in J.B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan, 1887, 2nd. ed.), p. 162. See also on ἦτω, J.H. Moulton, Prolegomena: Vol. 1 of A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906, 3rd. ed.), pp. 55-56.

<sup>81</sup>Cf. LXX, Ps. 104.31; 1 Macc. 10.31. See discussion in H.St.J. Thackeray, A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), p. 256.

<sup>82</sup>1 Cor. 16.12; 2 Cor. 12.16; Gal. 1.8, 9.

<sup>83</sup>TDNT, IV, p. 470.



the author felt free to use the word (compare the possible translation of *μαρὰνὰθά* in Rev. 22.20) suggests either that the word had a corresponding significance in the Greek speaking church at Corinth or that the word required a translation into the linguistic frame of reference of the audience.

The significance of the somewhat rare use of *ἀνάθεμα* corresponds to the findings about the word, *μαρὰνὰθά*. The evidence is fairly strong that this is a Jewish expression.<sup>84</sup> In which case, the sentence contains a second Jewish-Christian element.

It is possible then that the two Jewish-Christian words plus the combination of the other rare 'Pauline' words may indicate that 1 Cor. 16.22 is a non- and pre-Pauline expression borrowed by the author. It is also possible that the expression stems directly from the pen of the sender, the hellenistic-Jew, Paul, rather than the amanuensis.<sup>85</sup> If one accepts the literal implication of the signature statement then the text of 1 Cor. 16.22 is most likely penned by Paul himself. It seems more likely that the author would draw upon his own personal linguistic context than reach outside that context to convey a personal autograph message.

The point of this foray into the nature of the Pauline language of 1 Cor. 16.22 is to point out two things.

---

<sup>84</sup>*ἀνάθεμα* as a Jewish expression, see Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 142-44.

<sup>85</sup>For the distinction between Paul and the amanuensis, Bahr, 'Subscriptions', p. 411; *idem*, 'Paul and Letter Writing', pp. 465-77; Richards, Secretary, pp. 68-97, 183-88.

First, if the supposed non-Pauline language of this verse is borrowed, whether from the early church liturgy or elsewhere, it has been adopted by the writer to convey a personal, authoritative injunction within the epistolary context of a concluding autograph. Second, in terms of authorial presentation, the conjecture that this actually is a distinctively Pauline expression, i.e. a hellenistic-Jew using specifically Jewish expressions to a primarily Greek audience, suggests that this text may be a very personal exposure of the author's real concern regarding the letter recipients.

A dimension of the authorial self-presentation is revealed in the nature and tone of the concluding injunction. The conditional sentence is a sobering, sombre interjection which vacillates between two relational extremes--love and execration. To this is added a religious exclamation or prayer. There is a religious fervour in all this which intimates unbridled confidence, authority, and certainty about transcendent affairs.

Most commentators interpret the conditional clause as a curse.<sup>86</sup> The combination of the imperative, *ἦτω*, and the predicate, *ἀνάθεμα*, makes a strong apodosis which essentially means that a potential transgressor will be eschatologically consigned to judgment and possibly even excluded from participation in the present community.<sup>87</sup> Where does the authority lie to make this powerful

---

<sup>86</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 837; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, pp. 396-67; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 300.

<sup>87</sup>Roetzel, Judgment, p. 161-62.



judgment? E. Käsemann suggests the text is a sentence of holy law which originated in prophecy, but this conclusion is untenable since the only similarity between 1 Cor. 16.22 and the so-called sentences of holy law is the judicial nature.<sup>88</sup> Others suggest the words stem from liturgical practice in which certain communicants are banned from participation.<sup>89</sup> The use in an epistolary context, however, suggests that the curse is meant as a 'general', concluding exhortation to the letter recipients. The contexts of both the holy-law sentence and the liturgical formula attempt to locate the authority of the curse in a setting outside the text, in which case the writer is merely an agent of a higher authority.<sup>90</sup> Exactly the opposite is the case. The epistolary function focuses the authority on the text and its context: the injunction has authority directly related to its epistolary function and its relationship to the authorial figure presented in the epistle.

What is the epistolary function of the curse-command? It functions either as an enactment of the liturgical sequence of which it is a part, or as a kind of subscription, or as an authorial concluding command or

---

<sup>88</sup>Käsemann, 'Sentences', p. 69. Critiqued by Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 149-54; and K. Berger, 'Zu den sogenannten Sätzen heiligen Rechtes', NTS 17 (1969/70), pp. 10-40.

<sup>89</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 300; Bornkamm, Early, pp. 169-79; Robinson, 'Traces', pp. 38-41; Wiles, Intercessory, pp. 150-55; O. Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, SBT, 10, trans. by J.K.S. Reid (London: SCM., 1953), pp. 13-14.

<sup>90</sup>So Wiles, Intercessory, p. 117; Käsemann, 'Sentences', pp. 72-77; but refuted by Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 153-59.

warning. In all three cases, the imperative, judicial nature of the text stands out. The imprecatory character of the text assumes a very strong implicit authority for the one who makes the judgment, and it conveys a strong authorial self-assertion.

While the liturgical function of the epistolary features of the Pauline letters is not accepted in this study, for the sake of discussion with those who hold that the ending of 1 Corinthians is explicitly liturgical, the liturgical function will be evaluated in terms of its rhetoric. The liturgical function itself represents an authoritative authorial self-assertion. Even if the command of 16.22 is a ritualistic pronouncement which the author is incorporating into the letter-closing, the injunction controls the epistolary context by indicating that the letter should be read at the eucharist or that the eucharist should be enacted at the end of reading the epistle. Both situations imply that the text carries enough authority to initiate and direct the religious life and practice of the community, and even more significantly who should be included and excluded from the community. In addition, the text itself determines that the epistolary text should be recontextualized into the community's religious practice implicating the epistle's possible sacred status.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup>One problem with the liturgical view is the epistolary autograph conclusion. If one holds that the sender is penning vv. 21-24, then the liturgical ceremony is initiated by the amanuensis with the holy-kiss formula, with the sender then by his autograph initiating steps two (anathema or banning) and three (maranatha prayer) in the liturgical ritual of the Lord's Supper, which seems an



If the final injunction is a kind of a subscription, it represents a summary command.<sup>92</sup> The message and purpose of the epistle are cogently reduced to a single imperative sentence. As a subscription, the text is given added emphasis for it provides the summary and concluding perspective to interpret all that has preceded. The fact that the subscription as an epistolary summary is given as a command indicates that the letter message or purpose is to influence and/or change the behaviour of the recipients. Even more than that, the judicial or imprecatory nature of the conditional sentence indicates that the letter's message provides the criteria for understanding and executing a curse. The curse as a summary conclusion looks back to what the epistle has established as the proper behaviour for the recipients.<sup>93</sup> The fact that the subscription is a curse endows the entire epistle with the powerful status of being an unconditional, non-negotiable instruction.<sup>94</sup> The curse is an example of assumptive religious discourse which proclaims without rational argumentation. The fact that the subscription is an autograph and in conjunction with the signature greeting reinforces the authority and status of the sender as an apostolic emissary as claimed by the sender in the

---

awkward procedure and an untenable epistolary practice.

<sup>92</sup>One function of subscriptions is to summarize, see Chapter Three, section 2.3.4.4.

<sup>93</sup>Grosheide, Corinthians, p. 406: 'The last admonition sums up everything tht precedes'; Wiles, Intercessory, p. 151.

<sup>94</sup>Fee, Corinthians, pp. 837-38.

letter.<sup>95</sup> In fact, the curse carries no weight without the presumption of that role for the sender.

With regard to this final injunction being an independent authorial command or warning, it is difficult to differentiate this from its function as a subscription. The addition of a subscription is a formal epistolary practice in which the sender provides an authoritative summary of the letter purpose and message, what in a sense is 'legally' exchanged between the letter parties.<sup>96</sup> As noted above, a subscription is essentially a summary statement. The final injunction of 1 Cor. 16.22, even if it is not formally a subscription, offers a concluding statement which because it is in the autograph mode takes on the same authority as a subscription. Because there is only one statement it, like a subscription, is used to make the essential point the sender wishes to leave with the audience.

The use of the imperative within a cause and effect conditional establishes the text as a powerful pronouncement of judgment. As it is conveyed by the sender's hand, under the sender's signature, and as the sender's own parting instruction, the text assumes the sender's powerful position in and over the text. The absolute judicial character of the text as a religious curse presumes authority which dictates what is to be normative for the reader. In this case, the authorial

---

<sup>95</sup>Roetzel, Judgment, p. 162, 162n1.

<sup>96</sup>Bahr, 'Subscriptions', pp. 27-33.



presentation is neither pastoral, nor persuasive, but a display of power and authority.<sup>97</sup>

The religious interjection, *μαράναθά*, provides a final authorial presentation in the concluding injunction. No matter the specific religious thought it conveys,<sup>98</sup> its enigmatic placement after a malediction and the fact that it is an untranslated word creates a rhetorical flare. The effect of this flare underscores the importance of what has just preceded, much like an exclamation point.

In the discussion below regarding the audience perspective, a fuller exploration of what the text actually commands and how that clarifies the text's epistolary function is offered. At this point, the intent has been to explore how the text establishes the authorial self-presentation. The authorial presentation is evident in the concluding command being in the author's own handwriting, thus providing a very personal presentation of the author in the text. The original and distinctive aspects of the text possibly suggest that the text is a deliberate, authentic unmasking of the sender's essential concern with respect to the letter purpose. In addition, whatever epistolary function this text serves, the imperative mood of the statement controls the epistolary context. Furthermore, the imprecatory nature of the

---

<sup>97</sup>Roetzel, *Judgment*, p. 158: '1 Corinthians 16:22...should be read in its present context as an apostolic pronouncement of judgment carrying special power to convict the church...Whatever its background, when spoken by Paul the sentence assumes normative and powerful dimensions, because the apostle does in effect represent the Lord in his power to judge and to heal.

<sup>98</sup>On which see below.

command presumes the absolute power to establish criteria for making and executing the judgment required. It cannot be over-emphasized, the use of a curse as the parting summary perspective of the author creates one of strongest instances of the rhetoric of power in the letter. The presumption of authority in the curse undergirds or reinforces the powerful authoritative role created for the sender in the epistle.

### 3.2.2. The Audience Perspective

What particularly makes the closing of 1 Corinthians so 'dramatic' is the imprecatory command. This departing injunction is an authoritative confrontation between the speaker and the audience within the text. Through this confrontation, the audience encounters a rhetoric of power which reasserts the relational and religious perspective which is determinate for the epistolary situation. The creative adaptation of epistolary convention by the sender provides a highly charged moment in the text that requires unpacking with respect to the implied audience.

Within the context of the letter-closing, following the greetings, and immediately following the unique Pauline signature greeting, comes a strong, religiously laden, 'curse'. It is most probable that within the given letter-closing context and in conjunction with a signature statement, this autographic conclusion would appear as some kind of a subscription.

1 Cor. 16.22 works well as a subscription. Through the signature statement, the listening audience is made aware of the immediate text being in the sender's own



handwriting and thus carrying the sender's explicitly personal endorsement. As a judgment formula the text picks-up and reflects the strongest injunctions which have preceded this general one (1 Cor. 3.16-17; 5.13; 6.18-20; 7.10-11; 8.13; 10.27-31; 11.27-33; 14.37-38).<sup>99</sup> Similarly, the reassertion of the theme of love as a basis for proper Christian behaviour reinforces a dominant theme in the epistle (1 Cor. 2.9; 8.1-3; 12.31b-14.1; 16.14).<sup>100</sup> In both cases, the text is a reiteration or restatement of essential aspects of the letter's message. But no matter what the exact relationship of the subscription to the letter-body, the fact that the text acts as a kind of subscription forces the audience to reflect back upon the letter in order to determine how the text accurately summarizes the letter's message and purpose.

Besides 1 Cor. 16.22 being a recapitulation of essential aspects of the letter's teaching, the text also underscores the religious perspectives assumed in this epistle. First, the expression, εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, propounds the ultimate criterion for identifying with the text's message and with the sender's perspective. It is doubtful that an audience would perceive the significant change in vocabulary of φιλέω for ἀγαπάω, since φιλέω was the more common term for love in hellenistic

---

<sup>99</sup>On 16.22, see Wiles, Intercessory, p. 151; on other judgment forms in 1 Corinthians, see, Roetzel, 'Judgment Form', pp. 305-09

<sup>100</sup>Spicq, 'Comment', pp. 200-04, overstates the case by implying that φιλέω is a technical term for obedience. On the role of love as an enjoiner to obedience, see Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 158-62; Fee, Corinthians, p. 838.

literature.<sup>101</sup> The protasis of the conditional sentence is hypothetical and not necessarily directed at a specific problem.<sup>102</sup> 'Love' provides a significant, but general criterion for evaluating the hypothetical violator in the protasis. The term 'love' would include all aspects of personal loyalty or devotion as the ultimate test of Christian faith.<sup>103</sup> The object of devotion, κύριος or Christ Jesus, reflects the Christocentric religious emphasis established in the letter opening. The implicit Christology is hinted at again with the Aramaic word for lord in the word, μαράναθά, added at the end of this text.<sup>104</sup>

As a subscription, 1 Cor. 16.22 declares that the ultimate issue of the letter boils down to love for the Lord. The converse of the text, 'loving the Lord', is equally established through what the epistle teaches and commands. As a summary, this phrase suggests that the epistle is primarily concerned with a religious or spiritual issue of ultimate significance which makes the letter's message and purpose more significant, or in religious terms, more sacred.

Second, the apodosis supplies the religious consequence of being a guilty offender, ἦτω ἄνθρωπος. The

---

<sup>101</sup>NIDNTT, II, p. 547.

<sup>102</sup>Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 161-62.

<sup>103</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 396; Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 400; Fee, Corinthians, p. 838; Bornkamm, Early, p. 170: 'a general early Christian summary of the attitude of faith'.

<sup>104</sup>Moule, Origin, pp. 35-46.



imperative form, ἦτω, combined with the Jewish-Christian word, ἀνάθεμα, makes a strong adjuration. There may be a deliberate reflection upon 1 Cor. 12.3 where the concepts of Lord and anathema are significant. In 1 Cor. 16.22, the one who does not love the Lord receives the same sentence as, according to 12.3, Jesus is given by one who cannot confess him as Lord and who is outside the influence of the Spirit. To be ἀνάθεμα is to be unacceptable to God, out of God's favour, destined for wrath or destruction.<sup>105</sup> The execration is religious because it focuses on the divine perspective (one is cursed) which is determined by a faith affirmation: love the Lord or say, 'Jesus is Lord'. The explicit correlation of the concept of lordship with the epistolary subscription or epistolary summary suggests that the reader's adherence to the epistle's message and purpose equals loving the Lord or acknowledging Jesus' lordship.

The temporal frame for the curse is ambiguous: whether the curse implies exclusion from the present community or whether it implies future judgment. A present excommunication is hinted at as a possibility based on the command in 5.11, 'not to associate with any one who calls himself a brother and is sexually immoral'. An eschatological judgment may be implied by the sense of μαράνα θά as a prayer for the Lord's return. This possible ambiguity serves the epistolary function of the text as a summary injunction, for such ambiguity provokes individual self-reflection with respect to meeting the criterion, and community reflection with respect to its role in evaluating

---

<sup>105</sup>TDNT, II, p. 354.

and judging the offender. Once again, the text leads the audience back to the discussions in the letter-body for interpreting the significance of the judgment for the life and practice of the community.

A third enigmatic dimension to this concluding injunction is the religious interjection, *μαρὰνὰθά*. The significance of this word as part of the summary statement would depend somewhat as to whether it was a common formula in the church or whether it was an unusual word to the Greek speaking audience of the letter. The answer to this question would determine how much translation and explanation of the word would be required for the audience. Another interpretative issue is how this interjection relates to the imprecatory curse and the summary statement as a whole.

With respect to the first issue, there is simply not enough data to conclude how comprehensible the term was to the audience. The rarity of the word in all ancient literature and the probable translation of the word in Rev. 22.20 suggests the transliteration was not common. If this is so, then, an expression in a foreign language transliterated like *μαρὰνὰθά* written by the hand of a hellenistic-Jew would evoke an almost mysterious air, an incantation which harkens back to the primitive beginnings or roots of the faith.<sup>106</sup>

The explanation of the word which might be required for the audience would be similar to what one reads in modern commentaries: (1) the question over the proper

---

<sup>106</sup>Edwards, First Corinthians, p. 475.



division of the word, *μαρὰν ἄθᾶ* or *μαρὰνα θᾶ*; (2) the question whether the word means respectively, 'Our Lord has come', or 'Our Lord, come', and (3) the resultant question as to whether the formula is an invocation of the Lord's presence or an eschatological prayer.<sup>107</sup> All three questions impinge upon the force of the formula as a concluding injunction. It is not possible to know how the audience answered the three questions. But the judgment 'curse' is made emphatic by this concluding exclamation. The exclamation either declares the Lord is present and bears witness to the judgment or declares a hope in the Lord's return to enforce the pronounced judgment. Each instance acts as a seal by invoking the authority of the Lord to reinforce, legitimize, even sanctify, the curse. There is no effort to establish how this higher authority legitimizes the authority of the author to make such a pronouncement. It seems to be understood that the simple invocation of this higher authority is sufficient to enhance the authority of the utterance.<sup>108</sup> Keeping the invocation in a foreign language may enhance the religious significance of the pronouncement by adding a mystical dimension. It is not surprising that this solemn atmosphere of heightened religious expression provided a precedence for institutional liturgical formulas in the later church.

---

<sup>107</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 838; Wolff, Korinther, p. 229.

<sup>108</sup>Roetzel, Judgment, pp. 153-59, discusses how the apostolic pronouncement relates to prophetic authority.

The three enigmatic expressions, 'anyone does not love the Lord', 'let him be accursed', and 'maranatha', create a significant impact in their epistolary function as a summary statement for the epistle. The pronouncement emphatically contrasts the primary relational categories of faith proposed by the epistle: affirmation of the faith or loving the Lord makes one an insider, and not to identify with the faith as declared, expounded and proclaimed in the epistle is to be excommunicated or made an outsider. The contrast is made explicit by the two uses of the Lord in the pronouncement: the very same Lord who is loved or not loved is the same Lord invoked to seal or enforce the curse. The authority for such an ultimate pronouncement resides in the radical rhetoric of power in which the speaker presumes authority by mere utterance. This authority is enhanced by summoning a transcendent, divine authority to seal the pronouncement. Through all this the reader enters a radical religious ideology which assumes the right to determine what is normative and what is true. The enigmatic nature of the expressions, the authoritative discourse, the closed-religious ideology--all these act to presume. They do not permit debate, but only assent by the reader.

### 3.3. Summary

The signature statement of 1 Cor. 16.21-22 forms the second part of the letter-closing for the letter to the Corinthians. It is composed of two parts, the signature greeting (v. 21) and the concluding injunction (v. 22). The signature greeting is a unique Pauline epistolary



convention. It functions as a concluding autograph and as a first-person greeting to the letter recipients. There are several distinctive features to this signature greeting. First, it makes an explicit statement regarding the change to an autograph, when the conventional practice was signalled by the change in handwriting alone. Second, the concluding signature is a signature which includes the name of the sender. Third, the signature greeting is an unusual repetition of the epistolary greeting found in the letter opening. The effect of this signature greeting is to create an intimate and personal autographic conclusion. The signature is a clever adaptation of the greeting form and the autograph convention in order to reassert the relational perspective the letter seeks to create between the letter parties.

The concluding injunction following a name signature and in the autograph mode functions as a kind of a subscription or summary statement. The statement is enigmatic because of the peculiar religious expressions which summarize the letter's message and purpose. The expressions are laden with religious significance reinforcing the religious perspective established in the letter. The summary statement as an imprecatory command asserts the relational perspective of the letter in which the sender has authority to declare what is normative for the audience. The curse-pronouncement as a summary statement of the letter's message and purpose invests the entire epistle with ultimate religious significance and authority. The concluding injunction is a strong authorial

presentation which controls and establishes the epistolary message and purpose.

#### 4. The Closing Benedictions: 16.23-24

In all seven authentic Pauline letters, including 1 Corinthians, a formulaic grace benediction closes the epistle.<sup>109</sup> In all respects this serves as the final wish or farewell in place of the typical ἔρρωσο which brings most Greek letters to a definitive closure. In 1 Corinthians there is added a personal final benediction, an expression of love to the letter recipients. With these two blessings, the epistle ends.

##### 4.1. The Grace Benediction

The grace benediction which concludes 1 Corinthians is: ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν. From the authorial perspective, the benediction is stereotypical so the rhetoric of this closing element is based on its standard epistolary function. Any particular deviations or expansions of the Pauline formula will be examined to see how they might contribute to the particular message and purpose of 1 Corinthians.

For the audience, the rhetoric of the grace benediction stems primarily from its novelty as the letter's farewell. This novelty contributes to the epistolary situation and to the letter's message and purpose particularly as it presents the sender's perspective on the philophronetic dimension of the closing convention.

---

<sup>109</sup>See Chapter Three, section 2.3.3.



4.1.1. The Authorial Perspective

There are two primary aspects of the closing formula in terms of the authorial presentation. First, the adaptation of the conventional farewell shifts the primary function of the closing from a philophronetic purpose to a religious purpose. This is achieved by the focus on ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ as the essence of the farewell. There are two parts to this religious statement: (1) the emphasis on a particular religious experience or quality, ἡ χάρις, rather than on a mundane concern for the recipient's personal, specifically physical, well-being as conveyed through the typical farewell, ἔρρωσο and its variants; and (2) the particular emphasis on the divine source of the quality, τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. The effect is to bestow a Christian blessing upon the recipients.<sup>110</sup>

Another aspect of the authorial presentation which contributes to the religious nature of the closing benediction is the symmetry of the benediction with the letter opening.<sup>111</sup> The opening salutation bestows grace (1:3) and the thanksgiving focuses on grace (1:4), with both localizing this religious benefit in Jesus Christ and in Christ Jesus respectively. The Pauline farewell reiterates the opening, thus framing the entire epistle within the concept of the grace which comes from Jesus.

---

<sup>110</sup>For the argument classifying the formula as a blessing or benediction versus a wish-prayer, see Gamble, Textual, pp. 66-67; cf. Wiles, Intercessory, p. 115.

<sup>111</sup>While the repetition of the 'grace' theme is obvious, Belleville, 'Continuity', p. 36, over states the symmetry noting a thematic and deliberate structural duplication between the opening and closing.

This symmetry establishes a religious or ideological context for the entire epistle. The adaptation of epistolary convention in the closing farewell represents the assertion of the authorial perspective for the epistolary situation.

The second aspect of the authorial presentation is relational. By transforming the opening and closing into religious expressions, the inter-personal nature of these opening and closing conventions are downgraded. The religious focus in the closing (and opening) places the authorial philophrnetic concern upon the recipients' religious or spiritual well-being. This not only invests the letter with a religious purpose, it also focuses and confines the relational dimension of the epistolary situation to spiritual matters. The focus on the religious dimension of the relationship could be perceived as an elevation of the mundane epistolary purpose to a more significant 'spiritual' purpose.

In addition, the closing benediction, mostly likely in the sender's own handwriting, highlights the authorial presentation of the 'farewell'. The blessing takes on added significance because it is in the sender's own hand. The combination of the alteration of the farewell to a benediction and the use of the autograph mode dramatizes the letter closure: this is the sender's very own exclusive 'goodbye'. The fact that this is the briefest of the authentic Pauline grace benedictions is compensated for by the addition of the even more personal farewell or blessing which follows.



#### 4.1.2. The Audience Perspective

The impact of the grace benediction from the audience perspective would be very similar to the authorial perspective. The fact that the grace benediction is novel to the audience and particular to the sender's epistolary practice would lift the letter out of the routine order of epistolary communication. With respect to the audience, the closing reinforces the relational perspective of the letter and the religious context of the letter's message and purpose created from the letter opening. The distinctive form of the epistolary 'farewell' would mark the letter as an exclusive communication from the sender. The novel features of the closing by particularizing the epistolary situation helps to establish a special bond between the letter parties: 'only Paul, the apostle, closes his letters in this manner'.

#### 4.2. The Personal Love Blessing

1 Corinthians is the only Pauline letter which adds to the formulaic grace benediction a personal love blessing from the sender: ἡ ἀγάπη μου μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The addition of this second 'farewell' extends and personalizes the letter closing. In form it is similar to the grace benediction: (1) ἡ ἀγάπη is the blessing or gift, (2) μου is the genitive of source, (3) μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν associates the blessing with the recipients, and (4) the verb is elided. This then makes the expression in form a second benediction or blessing. The supplementation of the traditional Pauline grace benediction presents an interesting rhetorical moment in the letter--a letter which

has had such an authoritative tone ends with a personal statement of affection from the sender to the addressees.

#### 4.2.1. The Authorial Perspective

In comparison with the traditional Pauline epistolary practice, this personal love blessing is an exclusive feature in the closing of 1 Corinthians. The six other Pauline epistles finish after the grace benediction.<sup>112</sup> H. Gamble labels it an 'ad hoc addition which is best regarded as postscript'.<sup>113</sup> While it may be correct to see its function as a kind of postscript--an after thought to the grace benediction--the structure of the 'postscript' suggests that it functions in harmony with the grace benediction to form a unit, a double final wish or farewell. This epistle closes with a double benediction.<sup>114</sup>

The second benediction is different from the grace benediction in its personal nature. This personal nature is evident in the ascription of the blessing, ἀγάπη, as μου, that is as emanating directly from the sender. The contrast between this and the religious and stereotypical grace blessing is marked. In 1 Cor. 16.24 the audience experiences a very untypical intimate farewell. Even in comparison with the personalized farewells in friendly and family Greek letters, the directness of this personal love wish is startling. This is one of the most personal

---

<sup>112</sup>The doxology in Romans 16 is an addition or misplaced, see J.D.G. Dunn, Romans 9-16, WBC, 38b (Dallas, Word Books, 1988), pp. 116-17; Gamble, Textual, pp. 84-93.

<sup>113</sup>Gamble, Textual, p. 82.

<sup>114</sup>Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 301, interprets the two blessings as one benediction with two elements.



exchanges found in the Pauline epistolary conventions in which the sender speaks so directly about his individual feelings for the audience.

Though the second blessing is very personal, it still maintains the religious context of the epistle as a whole. The affection of the sender is expressed, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.<sup>115</sup> This implies that the relationship between the letter parties, even with regard to their personal affection, stems from their common Christian faith.<sup>116</sup> The similarity in form with the grace benediction furthers the religious tone of the personal love blessing. The religious qualification of this very personal expression keeps the farewell from 'descending' to the level of ordinary, common epistolary practice.

In terms of authorial self-presentation, the personal love blessing is a strong assertion of the authorial figure in the closing convention. The expression as an expansion of the typical Pauline letter 'farewell' conveys a deliberate effort to avoid formality and conventionality. It communicates a distinct, warm, friendly, and intimate concern for the audience. This would all be enhanced by the fact that the love blessing was most likely a part of the concluding autograph.

Perhaps the conventionality of the grace benediction as a regular Pauline epistolary form had reduced its

---

<sup>115</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 399, notes that the ἐν phrase could modify either 'love' or 'you all', but most likely modifies the whole sentence.

<sup>116</sup>Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, p. 367: 'Paul's love personal as it is, still is in Christ Jesus'.

spontaneous personal significance for the sender. This love blessing as a non-conventional addition indicates a candid, personal touch contributing to a friendly, intimate tone for the letter-closing. In relation to other Pauline letters, this elaboration or expansion of the grace benediction indicates a strong authorial self-assertion--the author has personalized his conventional epistolary conclusion exclusively for this communication between him and the addressees.

#### 4.2.2. The Audience Perspective

The addition of the second 'farewell' to the letter-closing presents a curious twist to the epistolary message and purpose. While much of the epistle reflects a friendly tone, there also has been a distinct official and authoritative tone to the letter. The latter tone is appropriate to the distinctly religious nature of the message and purpose of the letter. Yet, the final expression communicates a particularly personal concern for the audience.

The rhetorical effect of the second love blessing upon the audience would depend somewhat on their familiarity with typical Pauline epistolary style. If the historical-critical consensus regarding the correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians is correct, 1 Corinthians represents the second letter from Paul.<sup>117</sup> If this is so,

---

<sup>117</sup>For example, Fee, Corinthians, pp. 6-7; Hurd, Origin, pp. 50-53; and also the overly complex reconstruction of events in J.M. Gilchrist, 'Paul and the Corinthians--The Sequence of Letters and Visits', JSNT 34 (1988), pp. 47-69.



then there is not a great deal of precedence to establish the Pauline epistolary style for some of the audience. But with the precedence that did exist and in the context of the Greco-Roman epistolary convention, the love 'farewell' most likely presented a very personalized expansion of a letter-closing farewell.

Rhetorically, the second blessing would assert a friendly, personal relational perspective between the letter parties. However, as seen above, this personal perspective is given a distinctly religious context. But even though the expression of love is given a Christian context, it is still an expression of the sender's own affection for the audience. This expression of personal affection contrasts with the very authoritative nature of the concluding injunction (v. 22).<sup>118</sup>

Rhetorically, there is a sense in which the love blessing communicates an effort to win the audience over to the letter's message and purpose by appealing to the personal relationship which exists between the letter parties. The likelihood of the love blessing functioning as a 'rhetorical device' is made more probable when one considers the function of the autograph conclusion as a kind of subscription. In this sense, the second blessing communicates the personal, friendly aspect of the letter's persuasive appeal. In addition, the second blessing is an appeal to the audience to respond to the letter based on the personal relationship with the sender which exists

---

<sup>118</sup>Holmberg, Paul and Power, pp. 83-86.

because of their common religious perspective, ἐν Χριστῷ  
'Ἰησοῦ'.<sup>119</sup>

There is a sense, rhetorically, in which the second blessing like a typical Greek letter farewell serves a purely philophronetic purpose. The blessing, communicating the sender's affection, implies that the relationship between the letter parties is warm and friendly and that there is a desire to keep it so. The blessing implies that the relationship between the letter parties should continue. But the contingent element implicit in the love 'wish' is that the relationship of the sender with the audience will continue based on the audience's acceptance of the relational implications which the letter message sets forth.

The rhetorical impact of the personal love blessing from the audience's perspective is primarily relational. It represents an effort to secure the letter's intent by appealing to the personal bond between the letter parties. The second blessing also reinforces that that personal relationship is essentially a religious one.

#### 4.3. Summary

To summarize, the letter to the Corinthians closes with a double 'farewell'. First there is the stereotypical Pauline grace benediction, then there is the personal love

---

<sup>119</sup>It is not so much the case that the writer wishes to soften the blow of the letter (Fee, Corinthians, p. 840.), or that the sender wishes to communicate his love despite the problems in the church and his problems with the church (Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 402.), or that this expression is a final appeal to unity (Mitchell, Paul, p. 295), as it is a genuine example of pathos.



blessing. They are similar in form, but each is a creative adaptation of the conventional Greek epistolary farewell and closing health wish. The grace benediction alters the philophronetic purpose from a distinctly personal intent of maintaining contact to a distinctly religious intent. As such, the grace benediction emphasises the religious dimension as the primary relational perspective for the epistle. The love blessing is a personal expression of affection from the sender which corresponds to the usual philophronetic purpose of conventional Greek letter closings. Rhetorically, the love blessing is an appeal to the personal relationship of the letter parties in order to secure the letter message and purpose making the future of the relationship implicitly contingent on the addressees doing and accepting what the letter instructs and teaches.

### 5. Conclusion

The letter-closing of 1 Corinthians is composed of three closing elements: (1) greetings, (2) signature statement, and (3) a grace benediction. All three elements correspond to typical epistolary closing conventions found in the Greek letters. However, the closing elements in 1 Corinthians, while corresponding in form and function to standard epistolary practice, represent creative adaptation of traditional closing conventions in order to reinforce the specific letter message and purpose of 1 Corinthians.

The letter closing communicates a mixed message. It has definite friendly and personal overtones with the first-person signature greeting from the sender, with the autograph conclusion, and with the personal love

benediction. On the other hand, the closing reinforces an authoritative role or position for the sender. The strong authorial perspective and presence is evident in the use of the greeting conventions to assert and reinforce the concept of Christian community expounded in the letter. The concluding injunction is a most emphatic pronouncement of judgment declaring the ultimate religious standard for the audience as a community in relation to the sender's apostolic role. In addition, the concluding autographic signature statement which uses the sender's name invests the letter with the personage of Paul and thus recalls all the authoritative roles the sender adopted for himself throughout the epistolary discourse. The letter closing by creatively adapting epistolary convention reaffirms the religious or ideological and relational perspective of the letter.

The dual appeal to the audience on personal, friendly terms and from an authoritative stance over the audience is a part of the mixed signal which permeates the letter. At certain points, the letter appeals personally to the recipients to accept and conform to the teaching or instruction of the letter. At other points, the letter appeals from an authoritative stance for the audience to conform to the letter message. The letter form itself sends a mixed signal by using an essentially friendly letter format and mostly friendly or family letter conventions, but occasionally altering form and convention in accordance with epistolary practice found in official type correspondence. In this sense, the letter closing is



a fitting conclusion by its alternating between a friendly and authoritative relational perspective.

Perhaps what makes the letter closing so apt a conclusion is the strong rhetoric of power operative in the closing. The adaptation, even manipulation, of convention evident at almost every point works to assert, reinforce and underline the religious and relational perspectives which the letter seeks to establish. There is no rational argumentation. The closing demands conformity and asks or commands the audience to enact and enforce that conformity through certain community acts: the holy kiss and the anathema. The closing elements through their creative adaptation of convention contain a strong element of textual power which create a rhetorical effect which works to persuade the audience to the theses presented for their assent in the overall letter message and purpose.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE RHETORICAL SITUATION AS ENTEXTUALIZED IN THE LETTER,

#### 1 CORINTHIANS: A LITERARY-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

#### OF THE RHETORICAL SITUATION<sup>1</sup>

##### 1. Introduction

The historical situation traditionally has been one of the key determinative factors in interpreting or reading any New Testament text, and especially a New Testament epistle.<sup>2</sup> The epistolary occasion or what has been labelled the rhetorical situation also has been a traditional way to understand the rhetorical nature of New Testament letters.<sup>3</sup> Both historical-criticism and traditional rhetorical criticism have used the historical context in which a text is written and to which a text is a response as a means to discern the specific and particular intent of texts. However, in this chapter, the way the letter-text of 1 Corinthians presents a selected, limited,

---

<sup>1</sup>An earlier and abbreviated version of this chapter is published as D.L. Stamps, 'Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in New Testament Epistles', in Rhetoric and the New Testament, pp. 193-210.

<sup>2</sup>Most standard New Testament introductions discuss the occasion or situation as a necessary introductory matter for a proper exegesis of a New Testament epistle, i.e. Tuckett, Reading, p. 55: 'Knowledge about the situation addressed by a writer is also a very important factor in the exegesis of individual texts'.

<sup>3</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 34-36; Fiorenza, 'Situation', pp. 386-89.



and crafted entextualization of the situation will be explored as the basis for studying the rhetorical nature of the situation. From a literary-rhetorical perspective, the situation exists as a rhetorical figure<sup>4</sup> which the audience must construct in the process of its progressive presentation in the text. As such, the entextualization of the situation creates a rhetorical effect in the letter as a whole by its overall presentation and by the way it is used in specific topical discussions or in what one might call the individual rhetorical units in the letter.<sup>5</sup> It is this literary-rhetorical perspective of the situation as presented in the letter opening and closing and in the letter-body which will be the primary focus of this examination of the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians.

First, a brief survey and critique of the historical-critical and traditional rhetorical-critical reconstructions of the situation of 1 Corinthians will be presented. Secondly, the literary-rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians will be extracted from the letter-text and examined in its chronological order and in the order it appears in the text or its textual order. The specific contribution of the letter opening and the letter closing to the literary-rhetorical situation also will be examined. Thirdly, the way the entextualized literary-rhetorical situation is used rhetorically in the letter as a whole and within the individual topical discussions will be explored.

---

<sup>4</sup>The concept 'rhetorical figure' is defined below, section 2.1.

<sup>5</sup>On the definition of a rhetorical unit, see Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 33-34.

## 2. Traditional Reconstructions of the Rhetorical or Epistolary Situation

In the following section, the historical-critical and the rhetorical-critical reconstructions of the historical situation of 1 Corinthians will be surveyed and critiqued.

### 2.1. Historical-Critical Approaches to the Situation

The historical-critical understanding of the situation is constructed by examining the evidence for the situation referred to in the text and which can be deduced from other historical evidence.<sup>6</sup> The text is then interpreted based on the ways in which it directly addresses or corresponds to the specific reconstructed historical setting for the text.

With regard to 1 Corinthians, one recent commentator stated:

Our 1 Corinthians is an occasional, ad hoc response to the situation that had developed in the Corinthian church between the time Paul left the city, sometime in A.D. 51-52, and the writing of our letter approximately three years later. The difficulty in determining the nature of that situation is intrinsic to the text.<sup>7</sup>

Reconstructing the historical situation for 1 Corinthians depends on assessing four historical factors: (1) identifying the specific occasion which prompted the writing of the letter, (2) identifying the problem or problems to which the letter is addressed, (3) determining the specific practical issues which have arisen based on the problem(s), and (4) trying to identify how the problem

---

<sup>6</sup>Krentz, Historical-Critical, pp. 33-54.

<sup>7</sup>Fee, Corinthians, pp. 4-5.



arose in the first instance.<sup>8</sup> There has been a good deal of debate in defining all four historical factors from a historical-critical perspective for 1 Corinthians.

With regard to the specific occasion the debate centres on whether the oral reports (1.11; 5.1; 11.17), or the written reports (7.1, 25; 8.1; 12.1; 16.1, 12) mentioned in 1 Corinthians, or a combination of the two are the immediate occasion for the letter. The problem is complicated by the surface division in 1 Corinthians itself, with 1 Cor. 1-6 seemingly a response to oral reports, and 1 Cor. 7-16 seemingly a response to a letter from the Corinthians to Paul.<sup>9</sup> Generally, it is agreed that if one holds to the unity of 1 Corinthians, the letter is a direct response to immediate information the author received about the church, and to a letter received from the church.<sup>10</sup>

It is more difficult to identify the kind of problem or problems which lie behind the immediate occasion. The section of 1 Corinthians addressed to the oral information or reports about the Corinthian church is apparently concerned with divisions or factions within the church.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the part of 1 Corinthians responding to the letter from the Corinthians does not easily correlate

---

<sup>8</sup>Fee, Corinthians, pp. 6-15.

<sup>9</sup>The letter is divided this way by Fee, Corinthians pp. 21-23.

<sup>10</sup>Hurd, Origin, pp. 47-50; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 6-7; Mitchell, Paul, pp. 1-5.

<sup>11</sup>Hurd, Origin, pp. 96-107.

with the problem of divisions.<sup>12</sup> Scholars are divided then as to whether the problem is tension between Paul and the Corinthian church at large<sup>13</sup> or between Paul and some kind of opposition or divisions within the church.<sup>14</sup> The point is crucial because one cannot understand the specific intent of the letter, especially its combative and apologetic tone, unless the interpreter knows whether Paul is seeking to maintain, even restore, his relationship with the Corinthian church, or is seeking to mollify criticisms levelled against Paul and his gospel which are being raised in the church by some party or parties.

Theoretically speaking, once the critic determines the essential problem that lies behind the epistle, the specific issues related to the essential problem that are addressed in the epistle must be assessed. At the historical level, the critic reconstructs the thinking and practice of the opposition from the way the specific topics and other matters are discussed by the author in the letter. The transposition of the discussions in the letter into the views of the opposition sounds a simple

---

<sup>12</sup>Hurd, Origins, pp. 61-94, 114-209; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 4-6.

<sup>13</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 6; N.A. Dahl, 'Paul and the Church at Corinth According to 1 Cor. 1.10-4.21, in Christian History and Interpretation, ed. W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule and R.R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 313-35; J. Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind (Richmond: John Knox, 1959), pp. 135-67.

<sup>14</sup>Scholars holding to this position are surveyed in Hurd, Origin, pp. 96-107. Mitchell, Paul, pp. 65-68, suggests the letter is addressed to the issue of factionalism and not to the parties themselves; so also L.L. Welborn, 'On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics', JBL 106 (1987), pp. 85-111.



interpretive move, an interpretive strategy known as mirror-reading, but it is complex.<sup>15</sup> The critic must determine and assess both what the author actually claims the opposition believes and practises and what the author alludes to with respect to the opposition. That which is alluded to about the opposition is gleaned from the specific instructions addressed to the recipients (it is generally assumed that Pauline epistles are addressed to the church as a whole, and not the opponents in particular). The underlying assumption is that the specific instructions in the letter are indicative of problems in the church which need correction or confronting due either to the influence of opponents or to the departure of the congregation from the Christian faith and practice as taught by Paul.

Most historical critics of 1 Corinthians see the specific issues falling into two categories, theological problems and ethical or life-style problems.<sup>16</sup> This division corresponds well with the seemingly two-fold division found in the letter itself: a theological discussion/argument (chapters 1-4), and discussions of specific ethical or practical matters relating to the church (chapters 6-16). The theological issues centre on the concepts of wisdom (*sophia*), knowledge (*gnosis*), and

---

<sup>15</sup>J.M.G. Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case', *JSNT* 31 (1987), pp. 73-93; cf. Lyons, *Autobiography*, pp. 96-105; J.L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians* (JSNTSup, 40; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 77-120.

<sup>16</sup>As surveyed by Hurd, *Origin*, pp. 96-107.

being spiritual (pneumatikoi).<sup>17</sup> Further insight is gleaned about the specific belief system or theology of the opposition based on how the author corrects or instructs on a number of practical matters or problems in 1 Corinthians: the incestuous man (5.1-13), lawsuits (6.1-11), visiting prostitutes (6.12-20), marriage and singleness (7.1-40), food sacrificed to idols (8.1-13; 10.1-11.1), role and authority of apostles (9.1-27); women's place in worship (11.2-16), the Lord's Supper (11.17-34), spiritual gifts (12.1-14.40), the resurrection of the dead (15.1-58), the collection (16.1-11), and Apollos (16.12). From these matters the opposition is generally perceived to hold to a form of dualism and realized eschatology.<sup>18</sup>

The final historical excavation is the identification of the source of the beliefs and practices of the opposition. The identification of the source is crucial because this prevents the historical reconstruction of the opposing views from being skewed by only being seen through the eyes of the author or the 'enemy'. Identifying the source allows the critic to fill out the belief system of the opposition and judge how well the author has represented and possibly corrected the problems the opposition presents.

---

<sup>17</sup>C.K. Barrett, 'Christianity at Corinth', in Essays on Paul (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 1-27; J. Painter, 'Paul and the Πνευματικοί at Corinth', in Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C.K. Barrett, ed. by M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 237-50; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 8-13.

<sup>18</sup>Fee, Corinthians, pp. 11-13; Thiselton, 'Realized Eschatology', pp. 510-26; A. Lindemann, 'Paulus und die korinthische Eschatologie', NTS 37 (1991), pp. 373-399.



The historical-critical identification of the source of the belief system which lies behind the opposition confronted in 1 Corinthians is a lively debate. There are five main positions regarding the source of the thinking and practice of the opposition. A number of scholars identify the source of the opposition as some form of Gnosticism.<sup>19</sup> A second school of opinion, which seeks explicitly to deny a Gnostic background to the Corinthian error, locates the Corinthian problem in some form of hellenistic/Jewish wisdom speculation.<sup>20</sup> Another school of thought which disagrees with any identification of the opposition's theology with Judaism sees hellenistic paganism as the primary source for the opposition's belief

---

<sup>19</sup>W. Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth, trans. J.E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); U. Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit, BHT, 26 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1959); R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings, AGJU, 10 (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1971), pp. 23-40; S. Arai, 'Die Gegner des Paulus im 1. Korintherbrief und das Problem der Gnosis', NTS 19 (1972/73), pp. 430-37; E.H. Pagels, The Gnostic Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975). See the critiques by R. McL. Wilson, 'How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?', NTS 19 (1972/73), pp. 65-74; idem, 'Gnosis at Corinth', in Paul and Paulinism, pp. 102-14.

<sup>20</sup>With hellenistic-Jewish speculative mysticism, B.A. Pearson, The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and Its Relation to Gnosticism, SBLDS, 12 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973); with Jewish wisdom in Philo, R.A. Horsley, 'Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians', HTR 69 (1976), pp. 269-88; idem, 'Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth', CBQ 39 (1977), pp. 224-39; idem, '"How can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?": Spiritual Elitism in Corinth', NovT 20 (1978), pp. 203-31; idem, 'Gnosis in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 8.1-6', NTS 27 (1980/81), pp. 32-51; with Torah-wisdom of Sirach and Qumran, J.A. Davis, Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Cor. 1.18-3.20 against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period (Lanham, MD: University Press, 1984).

system.<sup>21</sup> Recent sociological approaches have given a fourth understanding of the source of the problem at Corinth by identifying the various problems and factions with socio-political divisions common to ancient hellenistic society.<sup>22</sup> J.C. Hurd has offered a fifth position which suggests that 1 Corinthians is an effort to sort out the misunderstandings of Paul's teaching that have come as a result of the radical changes in Paul's teaching between his first missionary visit and the 'previous letter' written after and in compliance with the Apostolic Decree.<sup>23</sup>

The historical-critical debate concerning the situation behind the text of 1 Corinthians continues. All such approaches attempt to isolate a definitive historical context to which the text refers and responds in order to interpret the specific intent of the text. Such efforts have produced interesting and provocative readings of 1 Corinthians. As long as theologians and historians are interested in the historical particularity of texts, such efforts will continue. But all such efforts are limited because they have a specific interpretive goal--the

---

<sup>21</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 14; also Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, pp. 14-16.

<sup>22</sup>Theissen, Social Setting, pp. 54-174; Marshall, Enmity, pp. 130-404; Chow, Patronage, pp. 113-66; R.F. Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), pp. 50-65; H.-J. Klauck, 'Gemeindestrukturen im ersten Korintherbrief', Bibel und Kirche 40 (1985), pp. 9-15; S.C. Barton, 'Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth', NTS 32 (1986), pp. 225-46; T. Engberg-Pedersen, 'The Gospel and Social Practice According to 1 Corinthians', NTS 33 (1987), pp. 557-84.

<sup>23</sup>Hurd, Origins, pp. 213-96.



historical reconstruction of the actual events and other historical contingencies specifically related to the letter at its time of writing, and because they utilize a single methodology to achieve that interpretive goal, historical criticism.

## 2.2. Classical Rhetorical Criticism and the Situation

Recent rhetorical criticism of the New Testament letters has used classical and modern rhetorical theory to develop the concept of the rhetorical situation.<sup>24</sup> There is actually little in practice which separates the concept of the situation in recent rhetorical criticism from the situation as conceived in historical-criticism. At this point, it seems necessary to review the present attempts at defining the 'rhetorical situation' and in turn to offer some evaluation.

Several scholars stand out as key figures in setting the agenda for the discussion: L. Bitzer, G.A. Kennedy, W. Wuellner, and E. Fiorenza. Bitzer, exploring the theory of rhetoric from the perspective of philosophy and modern communication theory, suggested:

Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation can so constrain human decision or action as

---

<sup>24</sup>The relationship between classical or Greco-Roman and modern rhetorical theory for the concept of the rhetorical situation is surveyed in Thurén, Rhetorical Strategy, pp. 70-75; and Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia, pp. 71-95.

to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.<sup>25</sup>

For rhetorical critics, especially biblical rhetorical critics, the insightful point was the introduction of this dynamic interplay between the perceived exigence and the response as a means to affect or modify that exigence.

G.A. Kennedy's handbook on rhetorical criticism, New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism, drew heavily upon Bitzer in defining the concept of the rhetorical situation.<sup>26</sup> It is Kennedy's formulation which has set the pace for many New Testament scholars' understanding of the rhetorical situation.<sup>27</sup> Kennedy translates Bitzer into the traditional language of biblical criticism: 'Once a preliminary determination of the rhetorical unit has been made, the critic should attempt to define the "rhetorical situation" of the unit. This roughly corresponds to the Sitz im Leben of form criticism' (p.34). Putting the concept in this light suggests a primarily historical dimension to the concept. This is brought out more clearly by Kennedy when he adds time and place (p. 35) to Bitzer's list of factors ('persons, events, objects, and relations') which define the exigence. However, in the end, Kennedy's discussion of the rhetorical

---

<sup>25</sup>L. Bitzer, 'The Rhetorical Situation', Philosophy and Rhetoric 1 (1968), pp. 6, 1-14. An important response and clarification of Bitzer is A. Brinton, 'Situation in the Theory of Rhetoric', Philosophy and Rhetoric 14 (1981), pp. 234-48.

<sup>26</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 34-36.

<sup>27</sup>As in Watson, Invention, pp. 8-9; J.I.H. McDonald, 'Rhetorical Issue and Rhetorical Strategy in Luke 10.25-37 and Acts 10.1-11.18', in Rhetoric and the New Testament, pp. 59-65.



situation focuses on two aspects, the audience (both the immediate and the universal), and the primary rhetorical problem which the speaker faces (pp. 35, 36).

For Kennedy what distinguishes the rhetorical situation from the traditional historical understanding of the situation is the rhetorical dimension. As he says, 'the response made is conditioned by the situation and in turn has some possibility of affecting the situation or what follows from it' (p. 35). The rhetorical critic, according to Kennedy's definition, seeks to discover the correlation between the inventional topics<sup>28</sup> and the overriding rhetorical problems, or the relationship between what is said and how it is said and why. L. Thurén explains it this way:

To reconstruct the rhetorical situation corresponds roughly to the speaker's first task in rhetoric, the inventio. In this phase of producing a speech the author defines the addressees' premises and needs, sets and clarifies his aims with the speech, and chooses adequate and effective material for its presentation.<sup>29</sup>

Kennedy and those who follow his suggested methodology have highlighted a neglected aspect in reconstructing the situation--the dynamic nature between the speaker's construction of text, the rhetorical problem, and the audience. Yet the overriding historical dimension to Kennedy's understanding of the rhetorical situation is evident in his effort to define the goal of rhetorical criticism in general. Kennedy's rhetorical criticism is

---

<sup>28</sup>The relationship between invention as a rhetorical concept and the speech, Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 14-23; Watson, Invention, pp. 14-20.

<sup>29</sup>Thurén, Rhetorical Strategy, p. 71.

rooted in a recovery of a 'real' history: 'What we need to do is to try to hear his [Paul's] words as a Greek-speaking audience would have heard them' (p.10); and a recovery of the historical author: 'The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author's intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience' (p. 12).

Wuellner's attempts at defining the rhetorical situation in response to Kennedy have helped to clarify how the rhetorical situation differs from the historical understanding of the situation: 'The rhetorical situation differs both from the historical situation of a given author and reader and from the generic situation or conventions of the Sitz im Leben of forms or genres in one point: The rhetorical critic looks foremost for the premises of a text as appeal or argument'.<sup>30</sup> In a later writing, Wuellner states more fully what he means, at least in relation to one specific biblical text:

To inquire into the rhetorical or argumentative situation is to ask what the specific condition or situation there is (not was, as an historical question) that generates the text as we now have it in Lk. 12.1-13.9...But the historical situation, both inside and outside the narrative and its sermon, is categorically different from the argumentative situation, the exigency, the 'intentionality', that gives (not gave) rise and shape to the text as argument, that is, in its orientation toward convincing/persuading the audience/reader. Distinct from intentionality, but closely related to it, is the concern for the values contained in, and projected, by the text.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>Wuellner, 'Where?', p. 456.

<sup>31</sup>W. Wuellner, 'The Rhetorical Genre of Jesus' Sermon in Luke 12.1-13.9', in Persuasive Artistry, pp. 99-100.



Drawing upon linguistics and literary criticism, Wuellner suggests a move away from an historically conditioned perspective of the rhetorical situation to a perspective governed more by the immediate context of the text. What Wuellner seems to be implying is that the rhetorical situation is not defined by the correspondence between the extrinsic factors and the textual strategy, but by the correspondence between the textual form and its argument or its ability to persuade. In this sense, the rhetorical situation is more a textual phenomenon than an historical event in the past.

E. Fiorenza, complementing yet distinct from Wuellner, utilizes insights from reader-response criticism to specify a four-stage rhetorical critical analysis which distinguishes between three different aspects of the rhetorical situation: (1) the historical argumentative situation, (2) the implied or inscribed rhetorical situation, and (3) the rhetorical interests of contemporary interpretation.<sup>32</sup> Like Wuellner, she also introduces a critical assessment of the values or the politico-theological self-understanding projected by the text as part of the rhetorics of the text.<sup>33</sup> Though Fiorenza is critically astute in her theory, in the end her actual application of these precepts to 1 Corinthians ends up being very much a historically conditioned reconstruction of the rhetorical situation.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>Fiorenza, 'Situation', pp. 386-89.

<sup>33</sup>Fiorenza, 'Situation', p. 388.

<sup>34</sup>Fiorenza, 'Situation', pp. 390-400.

In terms of evaluation, the agenda set by Kennedy for defining the rhetorical situation remains the controlling perspective for most New Testament rhetorical critics.<sup>35</sup>

For Kennedy, and those who follow his conception, the rhetoric of the text hinges on the correspondence of the form and content of the text with the historical or empirical author and audience. It is not surprising then that these rhetorical critics primarily analyze the New Testament texts from a largely ancient rhetorical model. In the end, the rhetorical critic engages in a type of 'rhetorical' form criticism, determining the rhetorical problem which precipitated the speaker's choice of the ancient rhetorical form as a means of assessing the function of the rhetorical unit.

For this perspective, the key factors with regard to the situation are the 'actual' audience and the 'actual' rhetorical problem.<sup>36</sup> The speaker/writer must properly conceive of the 'actual' audience in order to select and construct the proper rhetorical response which will convince this audience. In particular, the speaker/writer must grasp the 'actual' rhetorical problem, that crucial issue which must be resolved or overcome, in order to bring

---

<sup>35</sup>Similar to Kennedy if not dependent on him are , Mack, Rhetoric, p. 20; J.D. Hester, 'Placing the Blame: The Presence of Epideictic in Galatians 1 and 2', in Persuasive Artistry, pp. 282-85. The 'Betz' school of rhetorical criticism does not actually use the term, 'rhetorical situation', and in practice uses a historical-critical reconstruction of the occasion, Mitchell, Paul, pp. 6-8.

<sup>36</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, pp. 35-36; also Watson, Invention, pp. 9, 29.



the audience to the point of adherence to the writer's perspective.

There have been only a few traditional rhetorical critical analyses of the situation of 1 Corinthians.<sup>37</sup> Kennedy in his discussion of 2 Corinthians suggests that 1 Corinthians is deliberative in its rhetorical species in that the letter presents advice on the conduct of life, specifically to modify and change the behaviour of the audience.<sup>38</sup> Wuellner suggests that the rhetorical genre is epideictic in that the author is persuading the audience to remain firm to what they have already accepted in their adherence to the Gospel Paul preached.<sup>39</sup> M. Bünker's analysis of 1 Cor. 1.10-4.21 and 15 suggests Paul is using the judicial genre in 1 Corinthians in order to confront those well-educated and socially high-ranking Corinthians who are contesting his authority and teaching.<sup>40</sup> Rejecting both Wuellner's and Bünker's analysis, Fiorenza concludes that Paul writes 1 Corinthians as deliberative rhetoric in which he seeks to move the church to accept a concept of

---

<sup>37</sup>A non-traditional rhetorical critical analysis of the situation of 1 Corinthians, yet specifically using the methodology of Kennedy, is Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia, pp. 97-281, but the defined parameters of his method are not clear, and actually quite confusing.

<sup>38</sup>Kennedy, New Testament, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup>Wuellner, 'Paul as Pastor', pp. 60-63; and idem, 'Where?', p. 459; idem, 'Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation', in Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition in Honorem Robert M. Grant, Théologie Historique 54, ed. W.R. Schoedel and R.L. Wilken (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), pp. 184-85.

<sup>40</sup>Bünker, Briefformular, pp. 48-76; cf. Chance, 'Apology', pp. 144-55. who classifies 1 Corinthians as an apologetic letter.

unity and to conform to church practice based on his authoritative status as founder and 'father' of the church.<sup>41</sup>

The most thorough analysis of 1 Corinthians according to Greco-Roman rhetoric is M. Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation.<sup>42</sup> She regards 1 Corinthians as an example of deliberative rhetoric, more particularly a deliberative letter, specifically directed to bring an end to the problem of factionalism at Corinth.<sup>43</sup> Mitchell attempts to demonstrate that 1 Corinthians employs all the strategies of deliberative rhetoric: (1) future time frame, (2) appeal to advantage, (3) proof by example(s), (4) use of subjects for deliberation which address the issue of factionalism.<sup>44</sup> Essential to her argument is that 1 Corinthians uses both the language and topoi of political deliberative rhetoric which argues for unity or concord or

---

<sup>41</sup>Fiorenza, 'Situation', pp. 390-93; also, Welborn, 'Discord', pp. 88-90; Betz, 'Problem of Rhetoric', pp. 24-39. Several studies of smaller textual units of 1 Corinthians have classified each rhetorical unit as deliberative rhetoric, D.F. Watson, '1 Corinthians 10.23-11.1 in the Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric: The Role of Rhetorical Questions', JBL 108 (1989), pp. 302-08; idem, 'Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15', in Rhetoric and the New Testament, pp. 231-32; and J. Smit, 'Argument and Genre of 1 Corinthians 12-14', in Rhetoric and the New Testament, pp. 222-27.

<sup>42</sup>More recently Litfin, St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation.

<sup>43</sup>Mitchell, Paul, p. 1, passim.

<sup>44</sup>Mitchell, Paul, p. 23, see especially chapters two and three.



reconciliation, and that the letter is a unified argument directed to this one issue, factionalism.<sup>45</sup>

Rhetorical critical analyses of the situation behind 1 Corinthians are helpful in correlating the form and content of the epistle with the historical contingencies which lie behind the text. Most rhetorical critical interpretations of the situation differ from the historical critical in that a greater emphasis is given to the speaker's or writer's perspective as a factor in determining the historical audience and problem. The rhetorical critic sees the text as the speaker's understanding of the situation or exigence. Thus, analysing the speaker's rhetorical construction of the text (the invention, arrangement and style) provides the clues for reconstructing the rhetorical situation.

---

<sup>45</sup>A full review of her argument is not possible or necessary for this study, but several issues are problematic in her study: (1) While she marshalls evidence for a deliberative letter genre (pp. 21-23), the letters she cites are examples of literary letters rather than the Greek personal letter which 1 Corinthians seems more like. In addition it has yet to be proved that the theory and practice of Greco-Roman oral rhetoric was employed in letter writing. (2) While she demonstrates correspondence between the language of 1 Corinthians and political rhetorical discourse, such correspondence is not proof that the language is being used in the same way. (3) Mitchell over argues her case in that she can solve all problems of form and content by her rhetorical theory; yet she ends up with a rhetorical discourse in an epistolary frame, and her rhetorical structure is still dependent upon the epistolary formulas which demarcate the topical divisions in the letter. Is it realistically plausible that the father of the Corinthian church when writing to them about a number of topics, always addresses those topics in order to end factionalism? Are all the topics of 1 Corinthians examples of factionalism? It seems more plausible that Paul writes a real letter, a personal letter of instruction by a Christian leader to a Christian community on a variety of issues.

There is a need, however, to qualify the rhetorical critical emphasis on the speaker's perspective with regard to the situation. The divergence of opinion regarding the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians, for instance, is partially due to the critics different use of and understanding of the historical factors. Traditional rhetorical criticism, especially that espoused by Kennedy, has provided a valuable alternative and in some sense auxiliary interpretive approach to reconstructing the situation in comparison with historical criticism.<sup>46</sup> But such critical efforts are limited because they work with a specific interpretive goal, the correspondence of a text with the art of Greco-Roman rhetoric, and because they utilize an interpretive methodology that is primarily historical in nature to achieve that interpretive goal, classical rhetorical criticism.

### 2.3. Summary

With both historical and rhetorical criticism, the interpretive goal is very specific, and in that sense limited; and the methodological control in each perspective fits the goal. In both approaches, the situation is understood as a pre-textual event--with historical criticism it is the actual historical occasion with respect to the author and reader at the time of composition; with rhetorical criticism, it is the rhetorical situation as conceived by the empirical author at the time of writing.

---

<sup>46</sup>The contribution of Kennedy on this point is evaluated in Black, 'Keeping Up', pp. 256-57; and Lambrecht, 'Rhetorical Criticism', pp. 245-48.



Both interpretive approaches use the text itself as the evidence for recovery or reconstruction of the pre-textual situation. Both approaches attempt to avoid the consequent trap of the hermeneutical circle through the imposition of an interpretive control which supposedly provides an external counter-balance to any historical distortion the text may exhibit. For historical criticism that control is the history of religions; for rhetorical criticism, ancient rhetorical theory. Both approaches, however, neglect the literary nature of the situation, that it is in the first instance a literary construct, and neglect the rhetorical function of the situation, in which the entextualized situation acts as a rhetorical device in the text contributing to the overall rhetorical effect or persuasiveness of the letter's argument. It is this latter literary and rhetorical nature of the situation which will be explored with respect to 1 Corinthians.

### 3. A Literary-Rhetorical Analysis of the Situation in 1 Corinthians

Several of the discussions of the rhetorical situation provide the starting point for constructing a literary-rhetorical analysis of the situation in 1 Corinthians. Wuellner implies that the rhetorical situation stems from the premises of a text as appeal or argumentation, or it could be stated that the rhetorical situation exists as a premise of the text contributing to the argumentative or rhetorical nature of the text. Fiorenza speaks about the implied or inscribed rhetorical situation in the text. To speak about the inscribed rhetorical situation is analogous

to speaking about the entextualization of the situation. That is, the rhetorical situation exists as a textual or literary presentation within the text or discourse as a whole. It is possible, then, to think of the rhetorical situation as a literary construct embedded (or inscribed) in the text as a rhetorical device or figure which contributes to the overall rhetorical aim or to the argumentation of the text.

While it may be granted that any text, and an ancient New Testament epistle in particular, stems from certain historical and social contingencies which contribute to the rhetorical situation of a text, it is also true that a text presents a selected, limited, and crafted entextualization of the situation. The entextualized situation is not the historical situation which generates the text and/or which the text responds to or addresses; rather, it is that situation embedded in the text and constructed by a linear reading of the text which contributes to the rhetorical effect of the text. Certainly for an epistle like 1 Corinthians to work, the sender must present the entextualized situation in such a manner that elicits correspondence with some, if not most of the audience. Yet it is possible that the sender's perspective on the situation and its subsequent literary presentation in the letter-text may become a point of debate in the on-going relationship between the letter parties. Rhetorically speaking, then the sender constructs and inscribes his or her view of the situation in the epistolary text which the audience consents to for the sake of the argument. The



persuasiveness of the argument of the letter is linked to the entextualization of the situation in the letter.<sup>47</sup>

In order to examine the literary-rhetorical situation a procedure for isolating it from the letter-text will be proposed by adapting the narratological approach to epistles developed by N. Petersen.<sup>48</sup> Second, the literary-rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians inscribed in the letter will be isolated and plotted according to its chronological order and its textual order. Lastly, in this section, the relationship of the letter opening and closing of 1 Corinthians to the literary-rhetorical situation will be examined.

### 3.1. Isolating the Literary-Rhetorical Situation in 1 Corinthians

Ch. Perelman's discussion of a rhetorical figure suggests two characteristics as essential to the isolation of a figure from within a text: (1) a discernable structure independent of the content, and (2) a use that is different from the normal manner of expression.<sup>49</sup> The literary-rhetorical presentation of the situation has an analogous relationship to these characteristics. While the inscribed rhetorical situation is embedded within the letter-text as a whole, its structure as a story or narrative, as will be

---

<sup>47</sup>Two other definitions of the rhetorical situation which use literary theory and modern rhetorical theory are Thurén, Rhetorical Strategy, pp. 70-75; and Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia, pp. 71-95, but the end product in both studies is more historical than literary, especially in they way they anchor the reconstruction of the rhetorical situation in the intent of the historical or actual author.

<sup>48</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 1-65.

<sup>49</sup>Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, p. 168.

shown, is easily abstracted from the letter's content. By isolating the deictic references to the situation--those specific references to the relationship between the letter parties and to the circumstances about how the present correspondence came to be--one can then extract them from the primary informational discourse in the letter in order to examine the story of the relationship between the letter parties which the letter inscribes as the entextualized situation.<sup>50</sup>

The task now is to find a way to isolate the inscribed situation as a rhetorical figure and evaluate its rhetorical function and effect. The work of N. Petersen provides a model for such a task. In his book, Rediscovering Paul, the first third of the book is an attempt to transform Paul's letter to Philemon into a narrative.<sup>51</sup> The transformation of the letter into a narrative is based on the simple premise that letters tell a story.<sup>52</sup> His theory is actually more extensive and complex than what has been suggested, that embedded in a letter is a story of the relationship between the letter parties, rather his methodology entails the wholesale transformation of the letter's message into a narrative. This enables him to set-up the narrative world of a Pauline

---

<sup>50</sup>Deixis or deictic context refers to those discourse markers which specify the actual spatio-temporal (time and location) situation for the communication act; see Cotterell and Turner, Linguistics, pp. 236-40; Brown and Yule, Discourse, pp. 50-58. Deixis in letters is defined by, Violi, 'Letters', pp. 149-57.

<sup>51</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 1-88.

<sup>52</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 1-5.



letter and analyze that narrative world against the social structures and relations operative in the Pauline story.<sup>53</sup>

However, the wholesale transformation of the letter into a narrative reconfigures the textual structure, the form and content; that is, the letter becomes a narrative. As a result the letter in its transformed state takes on a different function: the letter-text as a narrative tells a story, while the letter-text as letter conveys a message.<sup>54</sup> In order to preserve the epistolary structure and function of a letter-text, it seems better to suggest that the inscribed situation tells a story and that story is embedded in an epistle. In this sense, both theories agree that in a letter there is a story of the relationship between the sender and the recipients.

Petersen has demonstrated that the story a letter tells has many of the components of narrative. The story is a narrative as it is an ordered account of two or more events.<sup>55</sup> The story has a point of view as it represents the sender's (or narrator's) perspective on the relationship between the letter parties.<sup>56</sup> In addition, there is a spatial and temporal stance with regard to the point of view.<sup>57</sup> Temporally, the story is told from the position of the time of writing, so that the events of the

---

<sup>53</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 17-23.

<sup>54</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, p. 9, recognizes the difference.

<sup>55</sup>This is a minimalist view of narrative, G. Prince, A Grammar of Stories (The Hague: Mouton, 1973).

<sup>56</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 11-13.

<sup>57</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering Paul, pp. 11-13.

situation receive their temporal marking from that point of view: present equals <sup>at</sup> time of writing; past equals before time of writing; future equals after time of writing. Spatially, the letter suggests a marked distance between the narrator and narratee in time and space: the letter is directed to an absent person in another place who will read the letter in a deferred time.<sup>58</sup>

The story a letter tells also has a plot.<sup>59</sup> Through a temporal point of view, it is possible to plot out a sequential arrangement of selected events and situations referred to in the letter with their possible causality, unity, and effect. An interesting feature of the plot in the letter's story is the sequence of events. The textual sequence is the narrator's arrangement which may or may not coincide with a chronological sequence generally operative in most historian's reconstruction of the situation.

Utilizing this understanding of the narrative components operative in the letter's story of the entextualized literary-rhetorical situation, it is possible to begin the process of extracting that story from the letter message. The first task is to identify the references to the actions/events/situations which particularize the relationship between the letter parties embedded in the letter text. The elements of plot and point of view, as mentioned above, enable these kernel statements about the situation to be listed or plotted

---

<sup>58</sup>The spatial and temporal aspects of the dynamics of letter writing is discussed in Chapter Two, section 5.2.2.

<sup>59</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, p. 13.



chronologically from the temporal perspective of the time of writing. This chronological sequence then represents the inscribed spatio-temporal story of the relationship between the letter parties, as it would be actualized by any reader(s) who seek(s) the 'logical' order.<sup>60</sup>

### 3.2. A Plot Analysis of the Literary-Rhetorical Situation in 1 Corinthians

Having adapted Petersen's narratological theory for isolating the literary-rhetorical situation or the story of the relationship between the letter parties inscribed in epistles, it remains to apply this theory to 1 Corinthians. In the analysis which follows the emplotment of the inscribed rhetorical situation within 1 Corinthians will be examined. The plot analysis will work from the temporal perspective adopted in the letter itself: the present tense is the time of writing. The point-of-view spatially and perspectively will be the sender's or author's. Operating from these points of view, first, the chronological order of the references to the situation will be set out. Secondly, the textual order will be examined, specifically to see how the temporal aspects of emplotment function within the letter-text.

#### 3.2.1. The Chronological Order

Establishing a chronological sequence for the references to the literary-rhetorical situation is complicated in 1 Corinthians. First, the letter is long. Second, the number of specific events or deictic references

---

<sup>60</sup>Petersen, Rediscovering, pp. 47-48.

to the story of the relationship between the letter parties are numerous. Third, some references are ambiguous in their temporality and in their discourse function with respect to the emplotment of the inscribed rhetorical situation. Yet, in spite of these complications, a basic sequential plot of the situation can be constructed.

From the speaker's point of view, the story of the relationship between the letter parties in 1 Corinthians has seven basic temporal divisions: (1) the sender's 'calling' (past with respect to time of writing), (2) the sender's initial visit to Corinth and 'ministry' while there (past), (3) subsequent developments at the church of Corinth since this visit and subsequent contacts between the sender and the recipients (past), (4) the sender's situation around the time of writing (Paul at Ephesus) (past and present), (5) the present situation (issues and problems within the church) with respect to the audience or recipients at Corinth as described in the letter (present), (6) anticipated actions requested by the letter with regard to the audience (future), and (7) anticipated events/contacts with respect to the ongoing relationship between the letter parties (future).

The references to the writer's 'calling' are not explicitly historical (1.1, 17; 2.10a; 9.1) except for those references in chapter fifteen (15.3, 8, 9). Their significance is not directly related to the story of the relationship between the speaker and audience as inscribed in the letter. The writer's perception of his calling is a more general experience which undergirds his ministry at



large, rather than exclusively to the Corinthians.<sup>61</sup> The significance of these references with regard to the letter will be discussed below.

The story begins more directly, then, with the initial visit and ministry of Paul to the Corinthians. The letter says nothing specific about the speaker's whereabouts or activities preceding his visit to Corinth, nor about his arrival in Corinth.<sup>62</sup> The speaker tells of his perception of the audience before their conversion to Christianity:

(1) they were ἔθνη (Gentiles/pagans) led astray to dumb/mute idols (12.2), and (2) not many were wise, influential, or of noble birth (1.26).<sup>63</sup> In discussing his ministry, he basically states he preached (1.17(?); 15.1, 11). With regard to his preaching, he gives a summary of his message, 'Jesus Christ and him crucified', and of his delivery, 'with fear and trembling' (2.1-4). This ministry is reflected in further general summary statements: 'I

---

<sup>61</sup>On Paul's calling, Dunn, Jesus, pp. 110-14; S. Kim, The Origin of Paul's Gospel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 56-66.

<sup>62</sup>Acts 17.1-18.4 is one historical source for these events, but it is inappropriate in this study to consider their significance as the point of this chapter is what the author chooses to include in the letter. On the relationship of Acts to the Pauline corpus, see J. Hurd, 'Pauline Chronology and Pauline Theology', in Christian History and Interpretation, pp. 225-48; G. Lüdemann, Paul Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology (London: SCM, 1984), pp. 1-43; for a more positive approach, M. Hengel, 'Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity', in Earliest Christianity, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM, 1986), pp. 3-68.

<sup>63</sup>On 1.26, see W. Wuellner, 'Tradition and Interpretation of the "Wise-Powerful-Noble" Triad in 1 Cor. 1.26', Studia Evangelica 7 (1982), pp. 557-62; on 12.2, M. Barth, 'A Chapter on the Church--The Body of Christ: Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12', Int 12 (1958), p. 131.

planted' (3.6); and 'I became your father' (4.15). The preaching was accompanied by baptisms, with the speaker having baptized only a few (1.14-16). No real information is disclosed in the letter about the author's teaching or instruction in the faith while at Corinth, simply that he delivered the tradition(s) to them.<sup>64</sup> In that regard, one is told that the speaker felt he had to talk to them as if they were 'spiritual' infants and worldly, and thus only able to give them 'spiritual' milk as opposed to meat (3.1-2). Perhaps the succinct statement, 'I laid a foundation' (3.10), provides the clearest general description of this teaching ministry.<sup>65</sup> The speaker alludes to the fact that he earned his own living while in Corinth (9.6, 12, 15-18), but these statements are an exegetical conundrum.<sup>66</sup> In this same discussion, there is an enigmatic reference to Barnabas (9.6), but how Barnabas fits in to this phase of the story is impossible to determine from this single statement.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>On the use of tradition in 1 Corinthians, see R.H. Mounce, 'Continuity of the Primitive Tradition', Int 13 (1959), pp. 417-24; E.E. Ellis, 'Traditions in 1 Corinthians', NTS 32 (1986), pp. 481-502.

<sup>65</sup>J. Shanor, 'Paul as Master Builder, Construction Terms in First Corinthians', NTS 34 (1988), pp. 461-71.

<sup>66</sup>Help is found in Marshall, Enmity, pp. 282-317; Hock, Social Context, pp. 59-62; E. Käsemann, 'A Pauline Version of the "Amor Fati"', in New Testament Questions, pp. 217-35; but for an alternative interpretation, see Mitchell, Paul, pp. 130-38, 243-50.

<sup>67</sup>It is inferred from this reference to Barnabas that, (1) Barnabas was a fellow-apostle; (2) there was some widespread tradition about apostles or about the early Barnabas & Pauline mission(s) and how they supported themselves; and (3) Barnabas had rejoined the Pauline mission (cf. Gal. 2.13). See Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 204; Fee, Corinthians, p. 404; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 84.



In substantive terms, very little data is given by the speaker about his initial visit and ministry to Corinth. It may be a reasonable assumption that such silence reflects the perception of that initial visit and ministry as a shared experience and thus part of the community memory and identity which exists between the letter parties. If so, this makes the selected, explicit references which are recalled in the letter discussions more emphatic or significant in terms of those discussions.

The third time-frame, subsequent developments in the church after the initial contact and subsequent contacts between the letter parties, also occurs before the time of writing the letter. Within this time period, chronological order is unclear. First, there are references to other Christian-ministry parties visiting Corinth after Paul: Apollos (3.4-6, 22; 4.6; 16.12)<sup>68</sup>, possibly Cephas/Peter. (1.12, 3.22)<sup>69</sup>, and possibly others ('you have ten thousand teachers in Christ' (4.15)). Then there is the 'previous' letter (5.9) in which at least the matter of the man living with his father's wife (or his step-mother(?)) was dealt with.<sup>70</sup> Since the previous letter, several contacts between the speaker and audience have occurred: a visit and

---

<sup>68</sup>On Apollos, see Chow, Patronage, pp. 102-107; Hurd, Origins, pp. 206-07, 97-99; F.F. Bruce, The Pauline Circle (Exeter: Paternoster, 1985), pp. 51-57.

<sup>69</sup>That Peter did visit Corinth, C.K. Barrett, 'Cephas and Corinth', in Essays, pp. 28-39; P. Vielhauer, 'Paulus und die Kephaspartei in Korinth', NTS 21 (1975), pp. 341-52; that he did not, see Hurd, Origin, pp. 99-101, 213-15, 269-70.

<sup>70</sup>On the previous letter, Hurd, Origin, pp. 50-53, 213-70.

report from Cloe's people (1.11), a letter from the Corinthian church (7.1), and a visit from the Stephanas party (16.17).<sup>71</sup> There are also a number of unattributed oral reports about the Corinthian church mentioned by the sender (5.11, 11.18; 15.12). Further, before 1 Corinthians was written, Timothy was sent by Paul to the Corinthian church (4.17), though his arrival in Corinth is not expected until after the letter arrives.

The situation of the writer around the time of writing is the fourth time-frame. There are two curious references to the writer's situation before or at the time of writing the letter: 15.32 states, 'I have fought with wild beasts in Ephesus';<sup>72</sup> 4.11-13 states that as an apostle, 'even at this present hour we are hungry and thirsty...in rags...brutally treated...homeless...and work hard with our hands'.<sup>73</sup> Both statements are congruent with the clearer assertion of 16.8-9, 'But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost because a great and effective door is opened for me, but there are many who are opposing [this work]'. This later statement gives the author's present location and immediate travel plans. There is also a hint that within

---

<sup>71</sup>There is some debate as to the order of these events, see Hurd, Origin, pp. 41-58; Gilchrist, 'Paul', pp. 47-69.

<sup>72</sup>On 15.32, see R.E. Osborne, 'Paul and the Wild Beasts', JBL 85 (1966), pp. 225-30; A. Malherbe, 'The Beasts at Ephesus', JBL 87 (1968), pp. 71-80.

<sup>73</sup>On 4.11-13, see R. Hodgson, 'Paul the Apostle and First Century Tribulation Lists', ZNW 74 (1983), pp. 59-80; J.T. Fitzgerald, Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence, SBLDS, 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 117-47.



the time-frame of writing and sending the letter the Stephanas party will leave to return to Corinth (16.18). From all this one can conclude that the author presents his situation at the time of writing as being in Ephesus having endured and undergone tangible opposition and danger, yet having many opportunities for ministry.

The fifth temporal division is the author's perception of the situation in the Corinthian church at or near the time of writing. The references which are key here are those which specifically state the situation, not those passages which by the nature of their discussion may infer an issue or problem. First, there are the oral reports which the speaker refers to which give him explicit knowledge about the church situation: (1) 1.11, 'I have been informed...that there are quarrels among you'; (2) 5.1, 'It is reported that there is immorality among you'; (3) 11.18, 'I hear that when you come together in church [at the Lord's Supper], there are divisions among you'; which is resulting in many being weak and ill with some dying (11.30).

The second set of specific or explicit references to the situation of the Corinthian church are those matters which were apparently discussed in the letter from the Corinthians sent prior to the writing of 1 Corinthians: (7.1a) 'Now concerning the things about which you wrote'.<sup>74</sup> If the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  formula is a consistent reference to matters or questions mentioned in the Corinthians' letter, then we

---

<sup>74</sup>Hurd, Origin, pp. 65-74; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p.115.

know about the following issues which were a concern for the Corinthian church: (1) sexual abstinence and marriage (7.1b); (2) status of virgins (7.25); (3) problem of eating idol meat (8.1); (4) the nature and practice of spiritual gifts (12.1); (5) the collection for the Jerusalem church from the churches of Asia minor (16.1); and (6) Apollos' plans to visit Corinth (16.12). The *περὶ δέ* formula, however, may be merely an epistolary formula signalling a change in topic without being a deliberate reference to topics from the letter from the Corinthians,<sup>75</sup> or it may be only one possible indication of a matter raised by the Corinthians' letter.<sup>76</sup> Even if it does indicate issues raised in the Corinthians' letter, some of the matters may be questions without a necessary problem or unsuitable practice lying behind the question or discussion.

The exact nature of the situation in Corinth based on the matters designated by the *περὶ δέ* formula is a difficult exegetical and literary interpretative problem for a secondary reader. This also applies to the other discussions or digressions in the letter not indicated by *περὶ δέ*. In summary, the situation references which are most explicit are the reports, because each of them refers to a specific event or action in the Corinthian church's life. The questions or issues designated by *περὶ δέ* and

---

<sup>75</sup>Mitchell, 'Concerning', pp. 229-56.

<sup>76</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 66: The 'matters' which they raised can be gathered in part from Paul's introducing them successively with 'now concerning' (*Gk peri de*)...Probably other questions in their letter are also answered in chapters 7-16, although their treatment is not introduced with the same formula.



those questions and issues which are not so designated are less event or action specific, and thus it is an interpretive decision as to how they reflect the present situation in the Corinthian church at the time of writing.

Another set of references to the situation of the Corinthian church at the time of writing are unattributed statements about the life and practice of the Corinthian church for which the author does not disclose how such information is known. In relation to the report of quarrels (1.11), the speaker states later within that discussion that there is also jealousy and quarrelling with some saying, 'I follow Paul', and others saying, 'I follow Apollos', (3.3-4). Later in the epistle, it is noted by the sender that within the Corinthian church, 'you have lawsuits among yourselves' (6.7). In 15.12 the writer states that some are saying (in Corinth) that there is no resurrection of the dead (15.12). Then, there are a number of possible matters of church life which can only be deduced by inference as none of these is directly stated to be endemic to the life of the church: sexual immorality with prostitutes (6.12-20), a problem with Paul's practice of a self-supporting ministry (9.1-23), women and worship in the church (11.3-16; 14.33b-36), misuse of spiritual gifts and lack of order in worship (14.1-40), baptism on behalf of the dead (15.29).

Much has been written about the theology of the Corinthian church problem.<sup>77</sup> But little is actually said in the letter by the writer about the theological beliefs

---

<sup>77</sup>See above, section 2.1.

and/or errors which are a part of the situation at Corinth. Except for the comment regarding some saying there is no resurrection of the dead (15.12), there is almost no commentary on the religious beliefs of the Corinthian church.<sup>78</sup> There are examples of ironic rhetorical comments which are not necessarily indicative of the situation at Corinth: i.e. 4.8, 'Already you have become overstuffed. Already you have become rich. You have begun to reign without us'; and 4.18, 'Some of you are puffed up [arrogant]' (cf. 4.19; 5.2).<sup>79</sup> Many commentators see the author quoting a number of slogans from the Corinthians which provide insights into the theological thinking of some of the people.<sup>80</sup> Especially notorious are 6.12 and 10.23, with the saying, 'everything is lawful for me', given twice in both verses. However, none of these slogans are grammatically indicated as quotes and thus directly attributable to the Corinthians. But whatever the nature or source of these statements, they are so integrated into the discussion that their origin is not crucial to the argument.

---

<sup>78</sup>A.J.M. Wedderburn, 'The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV', NovT 23 (1981), pp. 229-41; K.A. Plank, 'Resurrection Theology: The Corinthian Controversy Reexamined', Perspectives in Religious Studies 8 (1981), pp. 41-54; Horsley, '"How can some"', pp. 203-31.

<sup>79</sup>Wuellner, 'Paul as Pastor', pp. 60-62.

<sup>80</sup>Corinthian slogans, J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor. 6:12-20', CBO 40 (1978), pp. 391-96; Hurd, Origin, pp. 68, 86-89; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 251-42; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 108-110; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 144; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p. 62; Lightfoot, Notes, p. 213; but Robertson and Plummer, 1 Corinthians, p. 121, see these as Pauline statements, not quotes.



With regard to many of these hints at the situation with respect to the Corinthian church, what remains ambiguous at the level of a secondary reader was more likely explicit to the primary reader or the 'actual' addressees. Still, these implicit discussions about the church life or problems in the church by the speaker have their inherent ambiguity even for the 'actual' addressees. At many points the speaker's discussion of the issues remains at the level of general instruction, even ambiguously hypothetical instruction, so that even if there were an actual specific point at issue, even an empirical reader could not be positive that the speaker is addressing it directly. In much paraenetic instruction, the speaker's stance, whether speaking generally or specifically, is difficult to determine.<sup>81</sup>

This ambiguity is even operative with the use of the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  formula in 1 Corinthians. The formula introduces lengthy discussions at 8.1 and 12.1, but between 8.1 and 12.1, at least two other issues not designated by  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  are entertained. Similarly, after the matter which the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  of 12.1 introduces is closed and before the next  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  of 16.1, there is a lengthy discussion about the resurrection issue which is not introduced by  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$ . Thus, if  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  is formulaic in introducing topics from the letter from the Corinthians, the speaker's response, beginning at 7.1, is not a continuous discussion of issues raised only by the letter. Within this response to

---

<sup>81</sup>Aune, New Testament, p. 191; Brunt, 'More on the Topos', pp. 499-500; Richards, Secretary, pp. 217-21.

possible questions/issues raised by the Corinthians, the author may be inserting matters of his own concern. The point is that the author does not make it obvious in any of the instructive sections after 7.1, whether designated by the formula  $\pi\epsilon\rho\grave{\iota} \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  or not, that the discussion pertains to a shared concern or problem or practice which is indicative of the present state of affairs between the letter parties. If it may be difficult for the recipients to know whether for sure a specific situation at Corinth is being addressed by the speaker, it is even more difficult for secondary readers to reconstruct the situation from the speaker's discussion.

In the sixth time-frame, the situation references refer to that which is meant to occur after the time of writing the letter, specifically those actions commanded by the letter and contingent upon the response of the recipients. In this time reference, one moves into the realm of commands or imperatives. In the letter, there are two kinds of imperatives, ones which are explicitly directive in terms of action (i.e. 'greet one another with a holy kiss'), and ones which are more personal in terms of changing one's disposition or character ('be strong'). It is the former which are in view here. In this regard, there are a number of cases where an issue or problem is stated and in conclusion, a summary action is commanded. A sampling, particularly drawing attention to those cases which correspond to the oral reports and the matters designated by the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\grave{\iota} \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  formula, illustrates the point.



The oral report of 1.11 concerning quarrels has its corollary command either in 3.21, 'No more boasting in men', or in 4.16, 'I urge you, therefore, become imitators of me'. Similarly, the oral report about the immoral brother (5.1) has its corresponding command in 5.13, 'Expel the immoral brother'.<sup>82</sup> The discussion on sexual immorality (6.12-20) has two concluding imperatives, 'flee sexual impurity/fornication' (6.18) and 'honour God in your body' (6.20). The topic of sexual abstinence and marriage (7.1b) has a series of commands as instructions (7.2, 5, 9, 10, etc.). With regard to virgins (7.25), the concluding command is 7.36, 'let them marry'. On the issue of eating idol meat, several judgments are given: 8.9, 'be careful!'; 10.28, 'do not eat it'; and 10.31, 'do all things for the glory of God'. The matter of spiritual gifts (12.1) has three possible summary commands: 12.31, 'eagerly desire the greater gifts'; 14.1, 'pursue love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts'; and 14.40, 'let all things be done decently and orderly'. When it comes to the collection (16.1a), the command follows the introduction of the topic, 16.1b, 'do as I instructed the churches of Galatia'. A final issue is the arrival of the Stephanas party back in Corinth, either in conjunction with the letter or sometime after the letter arrives. Whenever they arrive, the recipients are instructed to receive these back and

---

<sup>82</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 227, suggests that this command is a quote of Deut. 17.7, but as there were probably no formal markers to designate it as a quote it operates at the level of an allusion.

commanded to honour them with the recognition appropriate with their status as leaders (16.15-18).

The nature of commands are such that they are contingent upon the will of the ones commanded.<sup>83</sup> In this sense, the commands only present the speaker's point of view. With respect to the contingency of these commands, some of them can be verified or followed-up more easily than others. For instance, it is easier to know if the 'wicked man' has been expelled than it is to know whether one is pursuing love or doing all things to the glory of God. In this sense, certain responses are more readily determined than others as the basis for the ongoing relationship between the letter parties which the letter fosters as instruction.

Finally, the seventh time-frame refers to those future actions and events discussed in the letter which directly affect the ongoing relationship between the letter parties. These have a more obvious chronological sequence. First of all, there is the letter itself. The letter discourse has the very basic, yet crucial, assumption of being sent, received, and read by the addressees. In conjunction, there is in the letter an assumption that the letter will precede Timothy's arrival (cf. 4.17), so the recipients are instructed concerning Timothy's imminent visit which will come after the letter arrives and concerning his return to report back to the sender, Paul (16.10-11). Another travel matter concerns the return of the Stephanas party to the Corinthian church either with the letter or shortly after

---

<sup>83</sup>Porter, Idioms, pp. 224-26.



the letter arrives (16.15-18). Timothy returns to Ephesus, because the speaker states that he will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost (16.8). After such time, the audience is informed that the speaker will travel through Macedonia (16:5) and then come to Corinth for a lengthy stay (16.5-7; see also 16.2, 4.19, and 11.34). After he arrives, the collection will be sent to Jerusalem by an envoy with letters of introduction (16.3) and the speaker may or may not go with the envoy (16.4). No matter, he will continue his journey after a lengthy stay (16.6). In addition, there is a discussion regarding a visit by Apollos at some undecided future date (16:12).

The story that the speaker tells or presents as set out in its relative chronological order is a fairly complicated story with many details and with difficult ambiguous references. In summation, several features stand out. First, the speaker's point of view as the controlling perspective in the letter is emphasized. The story begins with the speaker's calling to ministry and ends with his hopeful travel plans. The recorded details of the initial visit centres on what the speaker did, not on mutual experiences. In the same way, the descriptions of the situation with respect to the addressees centre on what the speaker knows from oral reports ('I have been informed'; 'I hear'), and on what the speaker chooses to discuss from the letter from the Corinthians, combined with what other issues the speaker chooses to address. Secondly, many potential remarks in the letter which might describe the situation are indirect or ambiguous. Their

general nature reflects either an assumption that the audience knows the specifics which are implied or there is an attempt to keep the specifics removed from the instruction. The ironic tone of some remarks indicates a negative perspective from the speaker's point of view on either matters the audience is well aware of or matters the speaker judges to be occurring. Even the future elements are speaker centred. It is the sender's future travel plans which are emphasized, and even the travel plans of cohorts are related to the speaker: Timothy will report back; the Stephanas party is to be appropriately recognized as he instructs; and the collection bearers will go when he says and with letters from him.

Another feature is that the story is almost exclusively focused on the letter parties. There are no references to outside opponents or to heretical or false teachers. The only characters in the story are directly related to the Corinthians and Paul in some way. The issues and spiritual matters of concern in 1 Corinthians are those which stem from the ongoing relationship between the sender and addressees which was established by the initial visit and perpetuated through further second and third-party contacts and through letters. In this sense, the letter maintains the community identity between the letter parties; there is no specific reference which state that this sense of community has been disturbed by outsiders.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup>Pogoloff, Logos and Sophia, pp. 99-121.



### 3.2.2. The Textual Order

It remains to see how the elements of the narrative set out above are utilized within the letter-text itself. From the perspective of the textual order, the references to the situation are placed in the context of the epistle as a whole. As the letter is a topical letter, each separate topic will be examined in order to see how the references to the narrative are inserted in these topical discussions.

After the statement of the letter purpose (1.10),<sup>85</sup> the first topic (1.11-4.21) is introduced by an oral report from Chloe's people about quarrels or divisions in the church (1.11). What follows, story-wise is a rehearsal of the sender's initial visit, focusing on his baptising (1.14-16), preaching (1.17-2.16), and teaching (3.1-23), including his perception of the Corinthians on that initial visit (1.26; 3.1-3). Except for a few minor references later in the letter, it is in this discussion that most of the references to this aspect of the story are given.<sup>86</sup> As the section draws to a close, the writer's present situation, his tribulation as an apostle, is alluded to

---

<sup>85</sup>Mitchell, Paul, pp. 197-200; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 52-54; White, 'Introductory Formulae', pp. 91-97.

<sup>86</sup>Dahl, 'Paul and the Church', p. 320: 'Paul's relations to the Church at Corinth. This theme is implicit throughout the whole section from 1.13 onwards and comes into the foreground at the end, 4.14-21'. Other analyses of 1 Cor. 1-4 seem to neglect this most important element in the argument of this discussion, B. Fiore, '"Covert Allusion" in 1 Corinthians 1-4', CBO 47 (1985), pp. 85-102; P. Lampe, 'Theological Wisdom and the "Word about the Cross": The Rhetorical Scheme in 1 Corinthians 1-4', Int 44 (1990), pp. 117-31; J.B. Polhill, 'The Wisdom of God and Factionalism: 1 Corinthians 1-4', RevExp 80 (1983), pp. 325-339.

(4.9-13). Then, a summary command is given: 'I urge you to become imitators of me' (4.16).<sup>87</sup> The whole section closes with 'visit talk': Timothy's impending visit and ministry (4.17), and Paul's plans to visit soon (4.19, 21). The matter of divisions is thus responded to by the speaker clarifying his relationship to the audience based on his initial visit and ministry, with the argumentative conclusion stated (4.16) and reinforced by a promise of an impending visit by Timothy and himself.

The next discussion (5.1-13) again is a response to an oral report, a report of sexual immorality (5.1). After admonishing the Corinthians' attitude to the problem and after giving them instructions on how to deal with the matter (5.2-8), the speaker reviews his previous letter and their apparent misunderstanding of what he meant, giving explicit clarification of what he now means (5.9-13a). The matter closes with a command for a specific, verifiable (future) action, to expel the offender (5.13b).

Two further topics come next. The matter of lawsuits among believers (6.1-11) is not attributed to any report or to a letter topic, but the author states that he has specific knowledge that this is happening in Corinth (6.1, 6, 7).<sup>88</sup> The matter is resolved by general instruction

---

<sup>87</sup>On the imitation command, B. Sanders, 'Imitating Paul: 1 Corinthians 4.16', HTR 74 (1981), pp. 353-63; D. Stanley, 'Become Imitators of Me: The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition', Bib 40 (1959), pp. 859-77; Mitchell, Paul, pp. 49-50, 221-22. For a more literary approach to imitation in Paul, see Castilli, Imitating Paul, pp. 89-138.

<sup>88</sup>On this topic, see A.C. Mitchell, 'Rich and Poor in the Courts of Corinth: Litigiousness and Status in 1 Corinthians 6.1-11', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 562-86.



with no specific action anticipated, though 6.4 may be a sarcastic rejoinder for a solution: 'appoint as judges those least esteemed in the church'.<sup>89</sup> The problem of sexual immorality related to prostitutes is discussed in general terms with no references to the inscribed rhetorical situation involved in the discussion (6.12-20).

At 7.1 the reader is introduced to the letter from the Corinthians and the beginning of a number of topics introduced by the formula, *περὶ δέ*. There follows three topics: (7.1) sexual abstinence, (7.25) virgins, and (8.1) idol meat. The discussion on idol meat is long (8.1-13; 10.1-33) and interrupted with a digression on the problem of apostolic rights (9.1-27).<sup>90</sup> All three topics are discussed without reference to the entextualized story of the relationship between the letter parties. Each of these topics are answered with general teaching referring to tradition in the churches, to apostolic and dominical commands, and to basic Christian principles. None of the imperatives which provide the answers are particular to the Corinthian situation so that they become the basis for the future relationship between the sender and the recipients.

---

<sup>89</sup>The problem is whether to read this as a command or a question, pros and cons are discussed in Fee, Corinthians, pp. 235-36, who takes it as a question; Lightfoot, Notes, pp. 211-12 argues for the command sense.

<sup>90</sup>A recent rhetorical analysis of 1 Cor. 8-10 is H. Probst, Paulus und der Brief: Die Rhetorik des antiken Briefes als Forms der paulinischen Korintherkorrespondenz (1 Kor 8-10), WUNT 2, 45 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), who sees this section of the letter as a complete and distinct rhetorical argument, the same as 1 Cor. 1-4, 5-7, and 11-14. Such a rhetorical analysis provides interesting assessments of each section of the letter but cannot be justified either by epistolary theory or rhetorical practice.

The discussion found at 9.1-27 is a vigorous defence of the writer's view of his rights as an apostle. Its relationship to the matter of eating idol meat is an open question as this discussion is sandwiched between the two excurses on the problem of idol meat.<sup>91</sup> No matter its relationship, it stands as a distinct topic. As such, it begins with rhetorical questions which recall the sender's status as an apostle, the sender's experience of seeing the Lord (his 'calling'), and the sender's work or ministry among the Corinthians.<sup>92</sup> Within the discussion of apostolic right to financial support, the speaker refers to the fact that he did not use this right during his stay with the Corinthians (9.12b-18). By these references to the writer's perception of his status and to his perception of his behaviour while with the Corinthians, the argument is secured to the inscribed rhetorical situation.

Before the next *περὶ δέ* topic, two other topics are discussed, first the relationship of women to men in church worship (11.2-16),<sup>93</sup> and second, the practice of the Lord's Supper at Corinth (11.17-34). With regard to the issue of worship, the instruction is general, but is framed with implicit references to the story. The discussion begins

---

<sup>91</sup>The relationship between 9.1-27 and the discussion of idol meat in chapters 8 and 10 is examined convincingly by Mitchell, Paul, pp. 237-56.

<sup>92</sup>On the use of rhetorical questions, see, Wuellner, 'Paul as Pastor', pp. 49-77.

<sup>93</sup>For a review of scholarly debate on this passage and a convincing interpretation, see J. Delobel, '1 Cor. 11.2-16: Towards a Coherent Interpretation', in L'Apôtre Paul, Corinthian Women, pp. 116-58.



with the speaker affirming the present situation in the Corinthian church: 'I praise you, because you have remembered me in all things, and [because] you hold fast to the traditions as I delivered them to you' (11.2).<sup>94</sup> It concludes with a reference to the present practice of the Pauline churches: 'If anyone wishes to be contentious, we have no such practice, neither do the churches of God' (11.16).<sup>95</sup> In this case, by referring to the story or situation, the writer appeals to a perception of community identity and practice to undergird the argument.

The references to the situation are more direct and varied in the discussion about the Lord's Supper.<sup>96</sup> The problem of the practice of the Lord's Supper is based on an oral report (11.18) which substantiates the strong criticism of the church meetings which introduces the topic: 'your coming together [as a church] does more harm than good' (11.17). The specific harm or consequences of these meetings is spelled out in 11.30, 'many are weak and sick among you, and a number have died'. In this discussion based on a report, details of what supposedly occurs at these church meetings is rehearsed: 'As you eat, each one goes ahead with his supper so that one is hungry, another is drunken' (11.21). The correction to the problem

---

<sup>94</sup>The effect of beginning with praise is noted and analyzed by Mitchell, Paul, p. 260.

<sup>95</sup>A similar appeal is made in 4.17, 7.17; 14.33.

<sup>96</sup>A much discussed section, see Theissen, Social Setting, pp. 145-74; Barton, 'Community', pp. 234-42; B.W. Winter, 'The Lord's Supper at Corinth: An Alternative Reconstruction', Reformed Theological Review 37 (1978), pp. 73-82.

is based on the speaker's appeal to dominical teaching or tradition which he claims he has already passed on to them (11.23-26).<sup>97</sup> The final command which corrects the specific problem at Corinth is simply: 'whenever you come together to eat [the Lord's Supper] wait for one another' (11.33). The discussion ends with the whole matter receiving an emphatic endorsement by a reference to the speaker's future plan to visit and provide further directions on the matter (11.34b). In this topical discourse on the Lord's Supper, the discussion contains very specific references to the situation based on an oral report; and, as a result, direct instruction which is situation specific rather than general is given to the audience. The matter is concluded with a direct appeal<sup>to</sup> a future temporal aspect of the inscribed rhetorical situation, the speaker's travel plans.

Next comes a topic designated by  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$ , spiritual gifts (12.1). In a long section (12.1-14.19), this topic is addressed by a wide gamut of general teaching, both theological and practical. But there is very little in the discussion which makes reference to the inscribed rhetorical situation. The author does not reveal in any detail why this subject occupies so much of the epistle. The discussion begins with an enigmatic reference to the audience's pagan past which possibly is an implicit reference to their experience of pagan 'ecstatic'

---

<sup>97</sup>For a summary of the literature and debate on the relationship of the Pauline eucharistic tradition and the gospels, see I.H. Marshall, Last Supper and Lord's Supper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 30-56.



worship.<sup>98</sup> If so, it is not a theme utilized in the discussion. The remark does reveal how the audience's past is perceived and asserted within the letter. Otherwise, there are only a few concrete situation references. The reader learns that the speaker speaks in tongues (14.18), and that it is the convention of the Pauline churches that women keep silent<sup>99</sup> (14.33b-35).

While it is possible to infer that the instructions or general guidelines in this long section entail correction of problems at Corinth, it is to be noted that unlike say the matter of the Lord's Supper, there is no situation specific details of the problem or situation specific instruction or correction.<sup>100</sup> Rather, as the whole matter is concluded, directives are made to the congregation with ironic rhetorical questions (14.36), and with a prophetic like statement of judgement<sup>101</sup> (14.37-38). But any heightened tension or specificity is cooled by the very basic and general summary commands (14.39-40). It is very surprising that in this long teaching section the audience is confronted with so little direct teaching or application, and that in this long section almost no

---

<sup>98</sup>T. Callan, 'Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and 1 Corinthians', NovT 27 (1985), pp. 125-40.

<sup>99</sup>Barton, 'Community', pp. 229-34.

<sup>100</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 571, sees the whole section, chapters 12-14 as a correction of the abuse of the gift of tongues; but as Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 204, notes that it is ambiguous at 12.1 whether the general subject of spiritual gifts or the particular matters of tongues and prophecy which dominate the discussion in chapter 14 are in view.

<sup>101</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 712; Käsemann, 'Sentences', pp. 68-69.

reference is made to the specifics of the rhetorical situation. It is no wonder that there is a lively scholarly debate as to what actually was occurring at Corinth, which one can only infer from this section.<sup>102</sup>

The next major discussion, the resurrection of Christ (15.1-58), is another long section.<sup>103</sup> Once again there is a dearth of situation references regarding the Corinthians. The discussion begins with a situation reference to the speaker's initial preaching ministry and to a perception of their response to that proclamation (15.1-2). Then there follows, similar to the Lord's Supper issue, a review of the tradition which the author claims to have given the audience at a prior time (15.3-8).<sup>104</sup> After this restatement of the tradition, the speaker gives his perspective on his relationship to this tradition as an apostle. What emerges is a rhetorically forceful authorial self-presentation: 'I am the least of the apostles... because I persecuted the church' (15:9); followed by a statement that God's grace and favour has been so effectual that the author can claim, 'I worked harder than all of them [the other apostles]' (15.10). After this rehearsal of the tradition and the speaker's relationship to it--what he preached and passed on to them working harder than all

---

<sup>102</sup>Fee, Corinthians, pp. 569-74, provides six pages of introduction to this section in an attempt to sort out the issue.

<sup>103</sup>See the footnote 80 above.

<sup>104</sup>J. Kloppenborg, 'An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula in 1 Corinthians 15.3b-5 in Light of Some Recent Literature', CBO 40 (1978), pp. 351-67; J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'Tradition and Redaction in 1 Corinthians 15.3-7', CBO 43 (1981), pp. 582-89.



the others; and the audience's relationship to it--what they received, believed, and on which they stand; the problems is stated: 'how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?' (15.12). What follows is very general theological teaching, argumentation, and even disclosure of spiritual mysteries (15.51). The whole discussion is so general, it is not even clear whether the Corinthians are the ones who are baptizing people on behalf of the dead (15.29-30).<sup>105</sup> In effect, the argument against those who say there is no resurrection is very indirect. The argument asserts that the gospel they received and believed (15.1-2) includes Christ's resurrection, which by implication entails a doctrine of the resurrection, a doctrine which is then spelled-out in general terms for the audience (15.13-57).

The final topic before the concluding conventional epistolary visit talk regards the collection which is introduced with the  $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$  formula (16.1).<sup>106</sup> This discussion is very situation specific, though it is primarily a discussion about a matter which lies in the future temporal perspective. The instructions reveal situationally that the standard instruction given to the Pauline churches is that each individual (or house church) should set aside funds on the first day of the week, probably the day for the Christian worship gathering.

---

<sup>105</sup>The use of the third person plural makes the reference to 'who' is practising baptism for the dead ambiguous.

<sup>106</sup>On the collection, see K.F. Nickle, The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy (London: SCM, 1966), pp. 111-29.

These instructions are enforced by a reference to the speaker's impending visit in which he will execute the necessary details to actually deliver the collection. From all this, the matter is very situation specific and the action required by the audience will be verified by the speaker's own action and personal follow-up.

Typical of many of the Pauline letters and of many ancient letters, the epistle ends with a visit talk section (16.5-12 particularly, but including 16.15-18). The speaker begins by providing a detailed itinerary of his own travel plans beginning with his hopeful visit to Corinth after travelling through Macedonia, then expressing his desire for a lengthy versus brief visit, and ending with why he plans to stay in Ephesus for the time being (16.5-9). Next, Timothy's immediately impending arrival in Corinth is discussed with instructions on how to receive him and on his return to Ephesus to report back to Paul (16.10-11). The travel plans of Apollos are given, introduced by a *περὶ δέ* formula, in which the audience is informed that he is not coming despite being encouraged by the speaker to travel back with the 'brothers' (16.11). Lastly, included in the final exhortations which are a Pauline epistolary practice, are the implicit travel plans of the Stephanas party (possibly the same as the brothers mentioned in 16.11) whom the audience is told to submit to and recognize or honour on account of the speaker's endorsement (16.15-18).<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup>Chow, *Patronage*, pp. 95-98.



In this final section of the letter-body, the letter becomes very situation specific focusing particularly on aspects of the anticipated future contacts between the letter parties both as a means to underscore the letter's message and as a means to provide for the ongoing relational or philophronetic dimensions of the letter. Rhetorically speaking, such visit talk means that what the letter demands and asks of the reader will be checked by the sender himself, and in the meantime by various sender-appointed emissaries.<sup>108</sup>

As one examines the various topical discussions throughout the letter, one begins to see that only a small percentage of those discussions are situation specific in that the discussions make concrete reference to the 'shared' situation between the letter parties or give instructions which directly apply to the Corinthian situation. Further, as the references to the inscribed situation are examined in the context of the textual discussions, their selectivity, their presentation from a particular point of view, and their rhetorical placement and effect on each topical discussion becomes more obvious. The key problem in terms of the rhetorical situation and the topical discussions is how much to infer as so much of the instruction is general in nature. Is such silence about the 'actual' situation an assumption of a shared knowledge or understanding, or is such a lack reference to

---

<sup>108</sup>On the role of envoys, Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys', pp. 641-62.

specific details with regard to the situation of the addressees or audience deliberately rhetorical in effect?

### 3.3. The Relationship of the Letter Opening and Closing to the Literary-Rhetorical Situation

As has been noted, Greek letter opening and closing conventions are somewhat stereotypical. They are situation-specific in terms of specifying the identity of the letter parties and their relationship in the opening and of reiterating this through the relational courtesies commonly employed in the letter closing. As the opening and closing are stereotypical and formulaic, there are not usually very many additional details beyond identifying the letter parties with respect to the inscribed situation in the opening and closing.

As expected there are few references to the inscribed situation found in either the opening or closing of 1 Corinthians. In the opening, the speaker is named, 'Paul'. His title and status as a called apostle of Christ Jesus is established (1.1). In addition, there is the one and only reference to a cohort of the sender, the co-sender, Sosthenes the brother. The recipients are then identified in spiritual terms and placed in relationship with the wider Christian church community (1.2). Next thanks is given to God for what God has done through the gift of his grace in Christ Jesus and by his faithfulness for the spiritual benefit of the recipients (1.4-9). The important point in relation to the inscribed story is that this positive description implies a positive perspective on the speaker's part toward the audience, at least in spiritual



terms. In the end, the opening with the thanksgiving establishes a relational dynamic, both the sender and addressees are called by God in Christ, which establishes a mutuality under God, yet in practice a functional distinction, apostle versus saints. In sum, the opening anticipates the story in the letter-body by stating the nature of the relationship between the letter parties as religiously hierarchical, and by stating the primary basis or focus of the relationship as spiritual or religious.

The closing (16.19-24) provides little additional information to the story of the relationship between the letter parties. The greetings particularize the relationship of the church at Corinth with the wider Christian, if Pauline, church community alluded to in the opening. The churches of Asia, the house-church which meets in the home of Aquila and Prisca, and 'all the brothers' send greetings, but the nature of these relationships is not given in any detail. On the other hand the distinctly personal greeting conveyed from Aquila and Prisca suggests that the readers are acquainted with them, implying there has been contact between the addressees and them. The sender's closing greeting and remarks confirms a close, personal relationship between the sender and the recipients, but one founded on primarily religious or spiritual terms--the context of the closing is 'in or of the Lord'. Though the closing is personal, the unconventional addition of a command (16.20<sup>✓</sup>a) and a judgment curse (16.22<sup>✓</sup>) conveys an authoritative stance on the part of the sender towards the readers which is

consistent with the relational hierarchy set forth in the opening.

In brief, both the opening and closing contribute little to the inscribed rhetorical situation. What they do specify is the concrete details of the relationship between the letter parties which control the relational dynamics of the epistolary situation. In 1 Corinthians these relational dynamics are religiously hierarchical and focused on religio-spiritual matters.

Having examined the way the rhetorical situation is inscribed in the letter in chronological order, in the order it appears in the text within various topical discussions, and in the epistolary opening and closing, it remains to examine the way the entextualized situation acts as a rhetorical device in the letter argument as a whole. By examining this, it is possible to evaluate the rhetorical effect of the inscribed situation.

#### 4. The Rhetorical Effect of the Inscribed Rhetorical Situation

The inscribed rhetorical situation works as a rhetorical device and creates a rhetorical effect on two levels. The first level is related to the overall presentation of the situation which is presented in the letter, that which corresponds to the chronological order. The second level corresponds to the textual order, specifically the way in which references to the situation function within each topical discussion.

In the following discussion, the rhetorical effect of each of the two levels will be explored. First, the



chronological order will be analyzed to see how it contributes to the authorial self-presentation and to the textual inscription of the audience. Next, the function of the references to the inscribed rhetorical situation will be examined with respect to each topical discussion, specifically showing how 1 Corinthians uses a pattern of argumentation based on the kind of knowledge about the situation in Corinth which prompts the discussion.

#### 4.1. The Rhetorical Effect of the Literary-Rhetorical Situation in the Letter-Text: The Chronological Order

With regard to the overall presentation of the inscribed rhetorical situation, its primary rhetorical function seems to be to dispose the reader to accept the letter message, and secondarily to provide the means for fostering the ongoing relationship between the letter parties by maintaining community identity and praxis. In order to do so the story of the relationship between the letter parties is contextualized in the letter-text as a limited and selected textual presentation from the speaker's point of view. The two figures in this story, the sender and recipients, are both presented in the story in such a way as to maintain the literary construction of them posited in the letter opening and reiterated in the letter closing.

##### 4.1.1. The Authorial Self-Presentation in the Literary-Rhetorical Situation

The first way in which the textual presentation of the story disposes the audience to accept the letter message is by the way the sender's identity is inscribed through the

'calling' theme. The sender's calling set forth in the opening is enhanced by several comments within the letter-body which convey the idea that the message which the speaker has at the heart of his ministry is divinely given: 'but we speak God's secret wisdom' (2.7), 'so then men ought to regard us ...as those entrusted with the secret things of God' (4.1), (see also 15.51). Similarly, in the discussion regarding the rights of an apostle, the speaker refers to his own status being substantiated by his experience: 'Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' (9.1). Then in establishing the doctrine of the resurrection, the speaker recalls this experience again: 'and last of all, he [the risen Christ] was seen by me [appeared to me]' (15.8). These references serve the authorial self-presentation by establishing the speaker's prestige, even privileged position, as an authoritative spiritual leader.<sup>109</sup>

In addition to the motif of the speaker's 'calling', the writer's status as an apostle is reinforced in a number of the references to the inscribed rhetorical situation. Through the comparison and contrast of the speaker's spiritual status and life experience as one of the apostles as opposed to that of the Corinthians (4.9-14), the distinctiveness of the two callings set forth in the opening is implicitly underscored. More directly, the hierarchical relationship of the speaker as an apostle to

---

<sup>109</sup>J.-N. Aletti, 'L'Autorité Apostolique de Paul Théorie et Pratique', L'Apôtre Paul, pp. 229-46. On an argument from prestige, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, pp. 303-10.



the audience is clearly affirmed at one point (9.2): 'If I am not an apostle to others, certainly I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord'. The role and status of apostles in the church is clarified in general terms at one point in the letter: 'in the church God has appointed first apostles', and immediately asks, 'Are all apostles?' (12.28-29). These general remarks indirectly establish the apostolic role as essential and distinctive, even prestigious in the church. Though later, the speaker's perceived status within the apostolic band is presented in conflicting terms: on the one hand, 'For I am least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God', (15.9); on the other hand, 'I worked harder than all of them [apostles]' (15.10). The cumulative effect of all these references reinforces the titular declaration, 'a called apostle', found in the letter opening. The result is to create an authoritative stance within the text that is relational (an apostle to the church) and directive (a proclaimer of apostolic teaching). From this authoritative stance, the sender's textual presentation of his status as an apostle imposes upon the reader an obligation to respond to the letter message.

Another way in which the story serves the authorial self-presentation is through the references to the speaker's ministry, both past and present, to the Corinthians. Interestingly, some commentators interpret these references and the references to the speaker's apostolicity as part of an apology to defend and reclaim

the speaker's role or status in the community.<sup>110</sup> But most of the references serve a different argumentative conclusion. The discussion regarding divisions or factions (1.11-4.21) contains the most references to the initial visit and ministry and to the speaker's perceived present ministerial status in the Corinthian community. There is a rehearsal of baptisms performed (1.14-16), of the content and manner of preaching (1.17; 2.1-5); and of the teaching regarding the faith after conversion (3.1-2, 6, 10). These references undergird the presentation of the speaker's primary pastoral status and role in the Corinthian community: 'you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel', (4:15) (cf. 9.2 where he asserts his apostolicity to the Corinthians). These references also undergird the final summary command which is presented as the solution to the divisions, 'I urge you therefore to become imitators of me' (4.16). The situation references become premises from which the argument proceeds. Rhetorically then, these references, in combination with the argumentative conclusion they support ('imitate me'), help to develop and maintain the community identity and the speaker's essential role in that community.

A similar phenomenon occurs with the discussion of apostolic rights (9.1-27) and with the discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection (15.1-58). As an apostle and as one who has seen Jesus, the speaker is presented as one

---

<sup>110</sup>Barrett, 1 Corinthians, pp. 200-02; Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p. 153; Klauck, Korintherbrief, pp. 63-70; Fee, Corinthians, pp. 392-441.



entitled to certain rights, but also as one who is in a position of freedom to not claim those rights.<sup>111</sup> The references to the fact of the speaker's status (9.1) provides the basis for the argument that such a one is free to carry out the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel in the way most effective for that person (9.15-23), even if it means being self-supporting.<sup>112</sup> Again, in the argument for the doctrine of the resurrection (15.1-58), the gospel tradition and the speaker's declared relation to the tradition (15.3-11), and the speaker's role in passing on that tradition to the readers (15.1-3a,11), provide the basis for the theological discussion (15.13-58). In both these topical discussions, the references to the story are foundational facts from which the argument proceeds. These premises of 'fact' become implicit statements about the speaker's past which further the overall presentation of the role of the author in relation to the audience.

A third way in which the authorial self-presentation emerges from the references to the rhetorical situation is through the way the speaker's point of view controls many of the references to the situation. One set of references presents the speaker as a judge or critic whose opinion is determinative for the self-image of the community identity. This authorial position or speaker's point of view is illustrated in the number of times the references to the situation is given with a tone of displeasure or disapproval: 'you are still worldly' (3.3); 'Some of you

---

<sup>111</sup>Chow, Patronage, pp. 173-75.

<sup>112</sup>Marshall, Enmity, pp. 292-95.

have become arrogant' (4.18); 'and you are proud' (5.2); 'For I say to shame you--is there no one wise among you?' (6.5); 'Instead you do wrong and cheat, and to your brothers!' (6.8); 'your coming together does more harm than good' (11.17); 'for some [of you] do not have any knowledge of God. I say this to shame you' (15.34). In each of these cases the author's point of view is that the audience has done something wrong and by implication the author's view point is that the audience should be concerned to not elicit an unfavourable judgment from the speaker (see especially the discussion on the immoral brother and the audience's failure to have acted properly based on a prior correspondence from the speaker, 5.1-13). Interestingly, each of the these judgments is related to concrete information, or made in topics dealing with situation specific problems.

The rhetorical effect of these judgments is two-fold: (1) to shame the audience, an argument from authority, and (2) to attack the audience, an argument ad personam.<sup>113</sup> In each case, the speaker adopts a superior stance towards the reader. While alternatively, the audience is presented as inferior to the one expressing the opinion. The expression of such shame or negative opinion, provides a possible motivation to adhere to the instructions given: do that which does not incur such judgments. Particular to 1 Corinthians is the fact that the relational dynamic between the letter parties is consistently hierarchical. Thus,

---

<sup>113</sup>Perelman, Realm, pp. 94-98; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, pp. 305-10, 316-21.



whether the speaker employs praise or shame/blame in 1 Corinthians, the authoritative stance of the speaker remains consistent. In the end, this authoritative presentation and argumentation reinforces the letter message.

#### 4.1.2. The Textual Presentation of the Audience in the Literary-Rhetorical Situation

The story or entextualized rhetorical situation through its overall presentation in the letter-text also contributes to the textual presentation of the implied audience. For instance, a corollary of the presentation of the speaker as superior, is the way the audience is presented at a number of points in the letter as the product or as the consequence of the work or ministry of the speaker: 'for we are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field, God's building' (3.9); 'I am not writing to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children' (4.14); 'follow my example, as I am of Christ' (11.1); 'Whether, therefore, I or the other apostles, so we proclaimed, and so you believed' (15.11). The audience presentation in these cases as the product of the sender's ministry reinforces the idea that the audience is under the authority of the sender's divinely appointed ministry. Being under the sender's ministry means there is an implicit obligation to consider the teaching or instruction the sender offers.

A further way in which the audience is presented in the references to the rhetorical situation occurs in those references that posit the Corinthian church's relationship

to tradition and to the wider Christian community.<sup>114</sup> Tradition is invoked at a number of points in the letter as a means of conditioning the audience and persuading the audience to adhere to the letter's teaching. At 11.2 a general statement is given about the Corinthian situation which appears to function rhetorically like a captatio benevolentiae: 'I praise you...because you are holding to the traditions as I delivered them to you'.<sup>115</sup> In two topical discussions the rehearsal of tradition which the audience had supposedly already received functions as the basis for instruction (11.23; 15.3). An analogous use of tradition appears to operate in the distinction that is made in some arguments as to whether what is instructed is a command of the Lord or a command emanating from the speaker's judgment (7.10) (cf. 7.6, 12, 25). Similarly at several key points, the audience is informed that what is instructed is consistent with what is taught or practised in the other churches of God (4.17; 7.17; 11.16; 14.33; 16.1; see also 10.32).

These appeals to tradition and community practice function rhetorically to create an audience that is a figure (church of God at Corinth) in symbolic relation to another figure (tradition and the churches of God).<sup>116</sup> In doing so, individuality and exclusivity is countered by

---

<sup>114</sup>Ellis, 'Traditions', pp. 481-502.

<sup>115</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 500; Barrett, 1 Corinthians, p. 247; Mitchell, Paul, p. 260.

<sup>116</sup>On symbolic relation as a form of rhetorical argument, see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, pp. 331-37.



establishing the notions of coexistence and hierarchy. This is consistent with the relational perspective set out and reinforced in the opening (1.2) and closing (16.19), that the addressees are part of and therefore, in some way, answerable to the wider Christian community. The rhetorical effect then is both to enforce the letter message through conformity and to maintain by conformity the community identity and practice.

So in a number of ways the chronological order or overall presentation of the rhetorical situation works to construe the textual presentation of the author/sender and the audience/addressees. In doing so, the relational hierarchy and the religio-spiritual perspective presented in the letter opening and reiterated in the letter closing is consistently maintained. In this sense, the inscribed rhetorical situation maintains the concept of community identity, practice and tradition, hence reinforcing the letter purpose by suggesting that deviation from the letter message or purpose will disrupt the relationship between the letter sender and the addressees.

#### 4.2. The Rhetorical Effect of the Literary-Rhetorical Situation within the Topical Discussions: The Textual Order

In the discussion above (section 3.2.2.) with regards to the textual order of the inscribed rhetorical situation, many of the rhetorical aspects of the references to the situation in each of the topical discussions have already been demonstrated. Rather than analyze each topical discussion once again, a number of these topical discussions will be examined to see how the entextualized

situation is used as an essential element and rhetorical device in the argumentation of each discussion.

Most of the topical discussions are introduced by reference to the speaker's source of knowledge about the issue: oral reports (1.11; 5.1; 11.18), unattributed specific knowledge about church problems (6.7; 15.2), and references to issues possibly raised in the recent letter from the Corinthians (7.1; 7.25; 8.1; 12.1; 16.1, 12). All in all, this leaves only two, or possibly three, matters which have no apparent attribution to the kind of knowledge the speaker has about the matter under discussion: (1) sexual immorality and prostitutes (6.12-20), (2) the place of women and men in worship (11.2-16), and possibly (3) the rights of an apostle (9.1-27) which is actually a digression within the discussion about idol meat (8.1-11:1). The source and kind of knowledge the speaker has about the issues or problems in the Corinthian church seemingly determines the manner or pattern of argumentation.

In each matter raised in response to an oral report, the concluding instructions are backed up by a reference to the speaker's presence in the community. The problem of divisions or quarrels (1.11-4.16) concludes with a reference to two future events in the relationship between the letter parties. First is Timothy's imminent arrival in Corinth. He arrives with a specific recommendation, 'who is my beloved son and is faithful in the Lord', and with a specific task, 'who will remind you of my ways which are of Christ, just as I am teaching everywhere in every church'



(4.17). Second is the sender's impending visit during which he will investigate the claims of the 'arrogant ones' (4.19). The tone of this forthcoming visit is to be determined by the addressees' immediate response to what has been instructed: 'What do you wish? that I come to you with a rod or in love with a spirit of meekness?' (4.21). The promise of Timothy's immediate visit (he will also report back to the sender as the sender states later in the letter, 16:11) followed by a promise of a forthcoming visit by the sender himself acts as a forceful injunction to adopt the instructions contained in the discussion.

Similarly the discussion on the immoral brother (5.1-13) concludes with a command for a very specific, verifiable future action: 'Expel the wicked man from among you' (5:13b). While no future visit is specifically attached to this matter, the presence of the speaker is still invoked in a curious way:

ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] Ἰησοῦ συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ... (5.3-5a).

The speaker makes two points about his presence. First, he is present in spirit, and can rightfully act in the community to make a judgment (5.3).<sup>117</sup> Secondly, when the community gathers together in the Lord, he is present with them as they carry out the necessary judgment upon the

---

<sup>117</sup>This text is problematic to say the least, and this discussion is heavily influenced by Fee, Corinthians, pp. 196-214; on this point, pp. 205-06; see also J.T. South, 'A Critique of the "Curse/Death" Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5.1-8', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 539-61.

offender (5.4).<sup>118</sup> In a very curious sense, the speaker argues for immediate action based on his presence in the community through his spirit and the Spirit. Once again, on the basis of an oral report which provides very specific information about the problem, a definite, situation-specific future action is commanded in association with the presence of the speaker (5.13b).

Another issue brought to light by an oral report, the Corinthians' practice at the Lord's Supper (11.18-34), is also discussed and concluded with a commanded specific action and with reference to the speaker's presence. After giving concrete details of the Corinthians' unacceptable behaviour (11.21), the audience is given very specific instructions which could only apply to the Corinthians: 'So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another' (11.33). This is enforced by a reference to the speaker's impending future visit, which is not only a personal follow-up to what has been instructed, but also a promise of further instruction: 'And the remaining matters [in this regard] I will set in order when I come' (11.34b). Both the 'threat' of a visit and the commitment to set the whole matter in order creates an aura of authority which places the speaker over the situation and the audience under that authority.<sup>119</sup>

There are two other issues which are very situation specific, the matter of the collection (16.1-4), and the

---

<sup>118</sup>Fee, Corinthians, p. 204.

<sup>119</sup>Commentators discuss a tone of censure in this section without discussing the rhetorical effect of 11.33-34 on the preceding section, 11.17-32.



query about Apollos' future plans for a visit to Corinth (16.12). Both are designated by the *περὶ δέ* formula, and thus possible matters which the Corinthians have raised in their letter. Both of these issues by their very nature can only refer back to the situation between the letter parties: the Corinthians' role in the collection is a particular act, and the matter of Apollos is dependent upon a prior established relationship. In each brief discussion, not only is the specificity of the issue indicated, but once again, the speaker's particular role in the matter is set forth.

With regard to the collection (16.1-4), the audience is told to do as the other churches do, in this case the Galatian churches, thus establishing a liaison of coexistence to enforce the required action.<sup>120</sup> But note the speaker's stated role, a role that is to be played out in the future visit by the speaker: when he comes, he collects the funds; he sends the envoy with letters of introduction; and he may accompany the envoy to Jerusalem. The authorial presence is overwhelming in this discussion as is evident in the first person singular verbs: *διέταξα*, *ἔλθω*, *παράγινωαι*, *πέμψω*. Such weight of authorial presence in such a short discussion acts as a persuasive argument which in effect emphasizes the importance of this matter in the ongoing relationship between the letter parties.

With regard to Apollos, the matter is simple (16.12). He is not coming now, but he will come when he has the

---

<sup>120</sup>On the rhetorical concept of the liaison of coexistence, see Perelman, *Realm*, pp. 89-101.

opportunity. This represents a future aspect of the inscribed rhetorical situation. This is a part of the story which is exclusively between the Corinthian church, the sender, and Apollos; hence very situation specific. Again, in such a situation specific context, the authorial presence is overt: 'I strongly encouraged (πολλὰ παρεκάλεισα) him so that he would come to you with the brothers'. The contrast between Apollos' plans and the sender's become obvious: Paul is coming soon for a long visit; Apollos may come at some indefinite time (ὅταν [whenever]). Paul wishes Apollos to go now; Apollos wishes to wait. The whole issue of the relationship between Paul, Apollos, and the Corinthian church remains a vague subtext in the epistle, provoking historical speculation as to what has occurred.<sup>121</sup> At the level of the text, little information is given; but in what is given, the authorial presence throughout the letter (see especially 3.1-9 and 4.15-16) and in this discussion in particular, rhetorically places the prestige of the sender above that of Apollos.

On the other hand, the remaining issues, especially those which are designated by the περὶ δέ formula (except as discussed above), are dealt with by general instruction which could be in common with all the other churches of God (cf. 7.17, 11.16; 14.33). In none of these other issues is the speaker's presence invoked, whether as a present or future event. In two of the issues not introduced by oral reports or by περὶ δέ but which evidence specific knowledge

---

<sup>121</sup>Scholars vary as to whether Paul's relationship with Apollos was cordial or strained: Hurd, Origin, pp. 74, 206-07; Mitchell, Paul, pp. 177-78, 293.



of the situation at Corinth on the speaker's part, lawsuits (6.7), and some who are denying the resurrection (15.12), there is more apparent direct address than in other discussions. Yet despite the situation specific references and the direct address, the instructions still have a general nature to them.

In a letter which is one of the most situation specific in the Pauline corpus, these general instructions in response to apparent questions or queries by the Corinthian congregation seem peculiar. Why is there little if any rehearsal of the Corinthian church practice on these issues? Why is there almost no direct application of the instructions to the Corinthian church life? At the rhetorical level, this lack of directness or specificity creates an interesting effect in two ways.

First, the occasional reminder in a number of these general discussions that what is instructed is in common with the practice of the other churches (cf. 7.17; 11.16; 14.33) combined with the paraenetic nature of the teaching, in effect places the discussion above the particular.<sup>122</sup> Implicitly, the audience is informed by such a stance that

---

<sup>122</sup>Aune, New Testament, pp. 191, 194-97; Stowers, Letter Writing, pp. 91-94; and a modern rhetoric perspective, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, pp. 83-99. Mitchell, Paul, pp. 50-53, argues that most of what is called paraenesis in 1 Corinthians is deliberative argument, but her understanding of the structure of the letter as a deliberative letter requires that these subsections be 'proofs', and not distinct discussions in their own right as paraenesis might suggest. But as she rightly notes, 'a thorough investigation of paraenesis remains a desideratum of NT and classics scholarship' (p.52).

there is a general, catholic ruling on the matter which provides uniformity and expects conformity.<sup>123</sup>

Secondly, the lack of particularity, creates a distancing of the authorial presence from the Corinthian situation by subsuming it under the 'common' doctrine and practice. By remaining above the fray, the speaker is presented as persuading by the expression of convictions, and thus not engaging with opponents (if there are any) or even answering the specific question(s) posed by the Corinthians. Presenting the argument/discussion in such a way establishes a communion of values and creates a disposition to action.<sup>124</sup> In a sense, this authorial distancing places the speaker above the actual debate or problem in Corinth and endows his authorial self-presentation with wider significance, and hence greater authority. In summary, the effect created by this general instructive stance both through the implicit conformity invoked and through the authorial distancing is to persuade and dispose the audience towards the letter message.

The conventional ending of the letter-body with visit topoi (16.5-11, 15-18) provides an effective way to reinforce the entire letter contents. This closing presentation of the speaker's future plans creates the same effect as the authorial presence used in other individual topical discussion. As a result of this talk of an impending visit, a reference to the future dimension of the

---

<sup>123</sup>Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, pp. 321-27.

<sup>124</sup>Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, New Rhetoric, pp. 74-83; Perelman, Realm, pp. 26-29.



inscribed situation, all the instructions in the letter are underscored as issues which have implications for the ongoing relationship between the letter parties.<sup>125</sup>

From examining these textual presentations of the individual topical discussions and the way the references to the inscribed rhetorical situation functions in each, there emerges a regular pattern of argumentation. Most topics are introduced by a reference to oral reports or by use of an epistolary formula like *περὶ δέ*. Then there follows instruction on the matter, which is either general or particular. Those matters which are explicitly situation-specific are dealt with by reference to a specifically verifiable, anticipated action on the part of the addressees. Further, in each of these situation-specific discussions, the authorial presence, most often a future visit, becomes a primary textual assertion reinforcing the expected action. In matters which are not presented as situation specific, from the speaker's point of view, a more general instructive stance is adopted without such an overt assertion of authorial presence. This pattern of argumentation is apparently peculiar to 1 Corinthians with respect to the Pauline epistolary tradition.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup>Mitchell, Paul, p. 293.

<sup>126</sup>This analysis of the argumentation in 1 Corinthians based on reference to the inscribed rhetorical situation is distinct from Hurd's analysis based on how the information has been received, whether oral or via letter, Origin, pp. 61-94, especially pp. 74, 82, 92-94.

### 5. Conclusion

At issue in this chapter is the fact that there is a rhetorical figure, the inscribed rhetorical situation, embedded in the letter-text. This figure can be isolated within the letter-text by its deictic nature or its situation specificity with reference to the relationship between the letter parties. The inscribed rhetorical situation is in essence the story of the relationship between the sender and addressees told from the temporal perspective of the time of writing and from the point of view of the sender. The problem in isolating the story is that the references to the story are randomly interspersed throughout the letter-text. Based on the narrative and deictic quality of the references they can be isolated from the primary discourse of the letter.

From a literary-rhetorical perspective, the crucial aspect of this isolated inscribed rhetorical situation in its chronological order, is its effect as a textual presentation. A chronological ordering of the references to the story reveals how the letter presents a limited, selected, ordered, and perspectively constructed situation.

The situation as a rhetorical figure creates a rhetorical effect which contributes to the overall persuasiveness or argumentation of the letter. From the overall presentation of the rhetorical situation or that which is based on the chronological order, the situation references reinforce the letter message and maintain community identity and convention. The primary way it does this is by presenting the authorial self-presentation and



the implied audience in a manner that is consistent with the relational hierarchy and the religio-spiritual perspective established in the letter opening and reiterated in the letter closing.

Similarly, as one examines the way in which the individual references to the rhetorical situation function within each different topical discussion or the way the textual order of the references function, the rhetorical effect of the specific references becomes evident. On an individual level, some of the references to the situation contribute to the argumentative goal of each discussion in various ways: argument from the prestige of the speaker, argument for a liaison of coexistence, etc.<sup>127</sup> In each topical discussion, the specificity of the situational references also determines the pattern of argumentation: whether a direct or general instructive stance is adopted, and whether the authorial presence is specifically invoked or distanced.

In this chapter the literary-rhetorical nature of the rhetorical situation has been the focus of the study. In terms of the rhetoric of the letter, it is the textual presentation of the inscribed situation which is crucial to the argument of the letter. The rhetoric of the letter operates from the situation as it is constructed and presented in the text. The argument of the letter, then, is a response to the situation which is presented in the text. This is evident in the way in which the topical discussions utilize certain selected aspects of the story

---

<sup>127</sup>Perelman, Realm, pp. 81-105.

as the basis of the argument and instructions directed to the readers.

In summary, the textual presentation of the rhetorical situation becomes the basis or a premise for the argument of the letter as a whole and for the individual rhetorical units in the letter. But this textual presentation of the rhetorical situation not only acts as a premise, but is rhetorically persuasive in and of itself. Through the textual presentation of the literary-rhetorical situation, the audience and the speaker are conditioned to adhere to the new reality which the text posits. Virtually, for the sake of the argument, the letter parties in the context of the epistolary situation accept the textual situation as the situation in which the letter operates. In more literary terms, the textuality of the rhetorical situation means that the speaker and audience as literary constructions themselves only meet in the 'world-of-the-text'. One aspect of the world-of-the-text which the text constructs is the rhetorical situation.



## CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to use a limited interpretative perspective, a literary-rhetorical reading, to illumine the way the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians literarily and rhetorically construe the epistolary situation. In addition, the goal was to examine the rhetorical effect the use and creative adaptation of convention creates in the reading of the opening and closing, especially the way the creative adaptations inscribe the identity of the letter parties as literary constructs for the epistolary situation. Furthermore, the goal was to see how the language, syntax and argument of the opening and closing work to shape and control the way the letter parties encounter each other through the letter-text. At the conclusion of this literary-rhetorical reading of the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians several results can be summarized in relation to the goals set out at the beginning.

Paul's letter to the church at Corinth opens and closes in a conventional manner, reflecting Greek epistolary practice and with some hints of influence from Jewish epistolary practice. Yet, though reflective of common epistolary practice, the Pauline opening and closing of 1 Corinthians are also creative adaptations of convention and reflect the Christian letter tradition of which Paul himself may have been the progenitor. By

reading and examining the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians in detail, by comparing and contrasting the opening and closing against Greek letters and the other Pauline letters, the distinctive epistolary situation which the opening and closing help to create is brought to the fore. From this close reading of the opening and closing both the relational perspective and the ideological perspective which serve as foundational premises for the epistolary situation have also come to the fore. In addition, the way the epistolary situation has been constructed and controlled through the opening and closing has been examined in the rest of the letter by the way the rhetorical situation has been selectively entextualized and utilized in the argument of the letter's message.

One of the key aspects of the relational perspective which emerges from the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians is the shift from the focus on the personal welfare of the letter parties as found in Greek family letters to a focus on the spiritual welfare of the letter recipients. This recasts the whole epistolary situation from one of maintaining the personal relationship to one of maintaining the spiritual life and faith of the recipients. This shift has not only relational implications, but also ideological implications in that the epistolary situation is based on a shared religious perspective.

Another distinctive aspect of the relational tone of the opening and closing is the communal nature of the epistolary situation. The sender writes in conjunction with a co-sender; and the recipients are addressed as a



collective whole, the sum of individuals and smaller assemblies which make one ekklesia. In addition, the opening and closing both extend the epistolary situation to include the larger Christian community. Communal associations enhance the authority of the sender and increase the accountability of the recipients to a wider network of concerned groups.

With regard to the relational perspective specifically between the sender and recipients, what has emerged from this analysis of the opening and closing is a mixed attitude. On the one hand, the format and selective epistolary conventions used in the opening and closing by the sender suggest a friendly and personal concern and interest for the addressees. On the other hand, some of the epistolary features of the opening and closing and some of the linguistic expressions used by the sender suggest a more official and authoritative relational tone for the letter. But this mixed relational tone is consistent with the authorial stance in the rest of the letter in which the author vacillates between the role of a caring brother or father and a cohort in the Christian faith and the role of a divinely appointed leader of the Corinthian~~7~~ church.

Ideologically, the opening and closing conventions are presumptive and assertive. They presume a shared Christian belief and practice with constant reference to 'our Lord'. In the language of the opening and closing the specific and dominant religious premises which frame the epistolary communication and which are assumed as a basis for the epistolary context are the acts of God in giving grace and

in being faithful and the lordship of Jesus Christ. The ideological perspective is also assertive in that the authorial stance with regard to the spiritual identity and experience of the recipients is always from a position of authoritative disclosure. The sender knows what God has done, is doing, and will do in relation to the recipients' spiritual life. Furthermore, the descriptive identity or roles the opening and closing assign to the letter parties are spiritual. The sender has a role and status by divine appointment; the recipients have a spiritual identity and status on the basis of God's action which is designated and bestowed upon them by the sender via the text. The opening and closing make it very clear about the spiritual hierarchy which governs the epistolary situation. Typical of much religious discourse, the ideological perspective is assumed and asserted and not justified or rationally argued.

As one examines the opening and closing of 1 Corinthians they clearly represent very creative adaptations of epistolary convention, the sender literarily takes control of the use of convention to establish the epistolary situation which corresponds to the letter message and purpose as a Christian letter of instruction. Likewise, the way the letter parties are described and identified conveys a definite relational perspective in which the sender's authority is enhanced and the recipients are enjoined to submit. Also, the way the religious language is used suggests the sender speaks with special, if not divine authority. As the literary rhetorical



nature of the opening and closing is examined, what emerges is a rhetoric of authority, even power.

Though the epistolary situation may be established in the opening and reiterated in the closing, it is also maintained in the letter body. One way in which the relational and ideological perspectives for the epistolary situation are maintained is through the entextualization of the rhetorical situation in the letter as a whole and in the various topical discussions which comprise the letter-body. The selected, limited and crafted inscription of the 'story' of the relationship between the letter parties is used rhetorically in the letter to enhance the argumentation of the letter-body. The sender signals those issues which are crucial to the ongoing relationship between the sender and recipients by the number of specific references to the rhetorical situation in the discussion and by the indication of a future visit by himself or by an envoy to follow-up the letter's instruction. Equally, the specific references to the rhetorical situation randomly dispersed throughout the letter help construe the textual identity for the sender and addressees with respect to the epistolary situation. In a real sense, the entextualized rhetorical situation becomes the 'actual' situation for the sake of the argument of the letter-text.

The opening and closing of 1 Corinthians are more than clues to the historical situation behind the letter. The opening and closing are also more than formal epistolary features with a limited conventional function. By examining the literary-rhetorical nature of the opening and

closing and the literary-rhetorical nature of the entextualized rhetorical situation, one can see how they create an important rhetorical effect which establishes and controls the epistolary situation in which the letter parties meet via the text.



## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Not listed are standard reference works such as dictionaries, lexicons, grammars, etc.

Abrams, M.H., The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: Norton, 1958).

Achtemeier, P.J., 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity', JBL 109 (1990), pp. 3-27.

Agnew, F.H., 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research', JBL 105 (1986), pp. 75-96.

Albright, W.F., and Mann, C.S., 'Two Texts in 1 Corinthians', NTS 16 (1969/70), pp. 271-76.

Aletti, J.-N., 'L'Autorité de Paul Théorie et Pratique', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven : Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 229-46.

Alexander, L., 'Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians', JSNT 37 (1989), pp. 87-101.

Alexander, P.S., 'Epistolary Literature', in Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period, CRINT 2.2, ed. M.E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), pp. 579-96.

Allo, P., Première Épître aux Corinthiens (Paris: Gabalda, 1956, 2nd. ed.).

Alter, R., The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

Anderson, J.C. and Moore, S.D., eds., Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

Arai, S., 'Die Gegner des Paulus im 1 Korintherbrief und des Problem der Gnosis', NTS 19 (1972/73), pp. 430-37.

Arzt, P., 'The "Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving" in the Papyri and in Paul', NovT 36 (1994), pp. 29-46.

Aune, D.E., The New Testament in Its Literary Environment, Library of Early Christianity, 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987).

- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres, SBL Sources for Biblical Studies, 21 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).
- Baasland, E., 'Die περί-Formel und die Argumentation (ssituation) des Paulus', Studia Theologia 42 (1988), pp. 69-87.
- Bahr, G.J., 'Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century', CBO 28 (1965), pp. 465-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Subscriptions in the Pauline Letters', JBL 87 (1968), pp. 27-41.
- Bailey, J.L. and Vander Broek, L.D., Literary Forms in the New Testament (London: SPCK, 1992).
- Bailey, K.E., 'The Structure of 1 Corinthians and Paul's Theological Method with Special Reference to 4.17', NovT 25 (1983), pp. 152-81.
- Bakhtin, M., Speech Genres and Other Late Essays, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, 8, trans. V.M. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).
- Balch, D.L., Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter, SBLDS, 26 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).
- Banks, R., Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980).
- Barclay, J.M.G., 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case', JSNT 31 (1987), pp. 73-93.
- Barrett, C.K., The First Epistle to the Corinthians, HNTC (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Essays on Paul (London: SPCK, 1982).
- \_\_\_\_\_, A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973).
- Bartchy, S., ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΕΑ: First-Century Slavery and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:21, SBLDS, 11 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973).
- Barth, M., 'A Chapter on the Church--The Body of Christ: Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12', Int 12 (1958), pp. 131-56.
- Barton, J., Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984).
- Barton, S.C., 'Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth', NTS 32 (1986), pp. 225-46.



- Bauckham, R., 'Pseudo-Apostolic Letters', JBL 107 (1988), pp. 469-94.
- Beardslee, W.A., Literary Criticism of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969).
- Beaugrande, R. de and Dressler, W., Introduction to Text Linguistics (London: Longman, 1980).
- Belleville, L., 'Continuity or Discontinuity: A Fresh Look at 1 Corinthians in the Light of First-Century Epistolary Forms and Conventions', EQ 59 (1987), pp. 15-37.
- Benko, S., Pagan Rome and the Early Christians (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984).
- Berger, K., 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament', ANRW II, 25.2 (1984), pp. 1031-1432.
- 'Apostelbrief und apostolische Rede: Zum Formular frühchristlicher Briefe', ZNW 65 (1974), pp. 190-231.
- 'Zu den sogenannten Sätzen heiligen Rechtes', NTS 17 (1969/70), pp. 10-40.
- Best, E., Paul and his Converts (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987).
- A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977 reprint).
- Betz, H.D., 'The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology According to the Apostle Paul', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 16-48.
- 'The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians', NTS 21 (1975), pp. 353-79.
- Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).
- 2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).
- Birch, D., Language, Literature and Critical Practice: Ways of Analysing Text, Interface Series (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).
- Bitzer, L., 'The Rhetorical Situation', Philosophy and Rhetoric 1 (1968), pp. 1-14.

- Bjerklund, C.J., Parakalô: Form, Function und Sinn der parakalô-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen, Bibliotheca theologica Norvegica, 1 (Oslo: Universitetsforlagen, 1967).
- Black, C.C., 'Keeping Up With Recent Studies: XVI. Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation', ET 100 (1989), pp. 252-58.
- 'The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills', HTR 81 (1988), pp. 1-18.
- Black, E., Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method (New York: Macmillan, 1965).
- Boers, H., 'The Form Critical Study of Paul's Letters: 1 Thessalonians as a Case Study', NTS 22 (1976), pp. 140-58.
- Booth, W.C., The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, 2nd ed.).
- Bornkamm, G., Early Christian Experience (London: SCM, 1969).
- Botha, P.J.J., 'Letter Writing and Oral Communication in Antiquity: Suggested Implications for the Interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Galatians', Scriptura 42 (1992), pp. 17-34.
- 'The Verbal Art of the Pauline Letters: Rhetoric, Performance and Presence', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 409-28.
- Bradley, D.G., 'The Topos as a Form in the Pauline Paraenesis', JBL 72 (1953), pp. 238-46.
- Brandt, W.J., The Rhetoric of Argumentation (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).
- Branick, V.P., 'Source and Redaction Analysis of 1 Corinthians 1-3', JBL 101 (1982), pp. 251-69.
- Brinton, A., 'Situation Theory of Rhetoric', Philosophy and Rhetoric 14 (1981), pp. 234-48.
- Broneer, O., 'Corinth: Center of St. Paul's Missionary Work in Greece', BA 14 (1951), pp. 78-96.
- Brown, G. and Yule, G., Discourse Analysis, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Bruce, F.F., 1 and 2 Corinthians, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1971).



- Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).
- The Pauline Circle (Exeter: Paternoster, 1985).
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians, WBC, 45 (Waco: Word Books, 1982).
- Brueggemann, W., 'At the Mercy of Babylon: A Subversive Rereading of the Empire', JBL 110 (1991), pp. 3-22.
- Brunt, J.C., 'More on the Topos as a New Testament Form', JBL 104 (1985), pp. 495-500.
- Bultmann, R., Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynischstoische Diatribe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).
- Bünker, M., Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1.Korintherbrief, Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten, 28 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).
- Burke, K., A Rhetoric of Motives, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1950).
- Callan, T., 'Competition and Boasting: Toward a Psychological Portrait of Paul', Studia Theologica 40 (1986), pp. 137-56.
- , 'Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and 1 Corinthians', NovT 27 (1985), pp. 125-40.
- Castilli, E.A., Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).
- Chance, J.B., 'Paul's Apology to the Corinthians', Perspectives in Religious Studies 9 (1982), pp. 144-55.
- Chatman, S., Story and Discourse (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).
- Chow, J.K., Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth (JSNTSup, 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).
- Church, F.F., 'Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon', HTR 71 (1978), pp. 21-32.
- Classen, C.J., 'St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 265-91.

- Clines, D.J.A., Fowl, S.E., and Porter, S.E., The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield (JSOTSup, 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).
- Coetzer, W.C., 'The Literary Genre of Paraneis in the Pauline Letters', Theologia Evangelica 17 (1984), pp. 36-42.
- Conzelmann, H., 1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Hermeneia, trans. J.W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
- Conzelmann, H. and Lindemann, A., Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of N.T. Exegesis, trans. S.S. Schatzmann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).
- Cooper, R., 'Textualizing Determinacy/Determining Textuality', Semeia 62 (1993), pp. 3-18.
- Corbett, E.P.J., Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, 3rd ed.).
- Cotterell, P. and Turner, M., Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation (London: SPCK, 1989).
- Coulthard, M., An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, Applied Linguistics and Language Study (London: Longman, 1985, 2nd ed.).
- Crystal, D., Linguistics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985, 2nd ed.).
- Culler, J., Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).
- Cullmann, O., Early Christian Worship, SBT, 10, trans. J.K.S. Reid (London: SCM, 1953).
- Culpepper, R.A., Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).
- Dahl, N.A., 'The Origin of the Earliest Prologues to the Pauline Letters', Semeia 12 (1978), pp. 233-77.
- 'The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church', in Neotestamentica et Patristica, Festschrift für Oscar Cullmann, NovTSup, 6 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), pp. 261-71.
- 'Paul and the Church at Corinth According to 1 Corinthians 1.10-4.21', in Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, eds. W.R. Farmer, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 313-35.



Davis, J.A., Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1.18-3.20 Against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period (Lanham: University Press, 1984).

Deissmann, A., Bible Studies, trans. A. Grieve (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901).

— Light from the Ancient East (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910).

Delobel, J., '1 Cor. 11.2-16: Towards a Coherent Interpretation', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven : Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 369-89.

Detweiler, R., 'What is a Sacred Text?', Semeia 31 (1985), pp. 213-30.

Dion, P.E., 'The Aramaic "Family Letter" and Related Epistolary Forms in other Oriental Languages in Hellenistic Greek', Semeia 22 (1981), pp. 59-76.

Doty, W., Letters in Primitive Christianity, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

— 'The Classification of Epistolary Literature', CBQ 31 (1969), pp. 183-99.

Downing, F.G., 'A Bas Les Aristos: The Relevance of Higher Literature for the Understanding of the Earliest Christian Writings', NovT 30 (1988), pp. 212-30.

Dunn, J.D.G., Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament (London: SCM, 1975).

— Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry Into the Character of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

— Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry Into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980).

— Romans 9-16, WBC, 38b (Dallas: Word Books, 1988).

Dunphy, W., 'Maranatha: Development in Early Christology', ITQ 37 (1970), pp. 294-308.

Eagleton, T., Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

Edwards, T.C., A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897, 3rd ed.).

- Eissfeldt, O., The Old Testament: An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).
- Elliott, N., The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism (JSNTSup, 45; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).
- Ellis, E.E., Prophecy and Hermeneutics in Early Christianity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
- 'Traditions in 1 Corinthians', NTS 32 (1986), pp. 481-502.
- 'Paul and his Co-Workers', NTS 17 (1970/71), pp. 437-52.
- Elsom, H., 'The New Testament and Greco-Roman Writing', in Literary Guide to the Bible, eds. R. Alter and F. Kermode (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 561-78.
- Engberg-Pedersen, T., 'The Gospel and Social Practice According to 1 Corinthians', NTS 33 (1987), pp. 557-84.
- Evans, E., The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, The Clarendon Bible (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930).
- Exler, F.J.X., The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter of the Epistolary Papyri (3rd. c. B.C. - 3rd c. A.D.): A Study in Greek Epistolography (Chicago: Ares, 1976 reprint).
- Fee, G.D., The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).
- New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Student and Pastors (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983).
- Filson, F.V., 'The Significance of the Early House Churches', JBL 56 (1939), pp. 105-12.
- Fiore, B., '"Covert Allusion" in 1 Corinthians 1-4', CBQ 47 (1985), pp. 85-102.
- Fiorenza, E., 'The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship', JBL 107 (1988), pp. 3-17.
- 'Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians', NTS 33 (1987), pp. 386-403.
- Fischer, J.A., 'Pauline Literary Forms and Thought Patterns', CBQ 39 (1977), pp. 209-23.
- Fish, S., Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).



- Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- Fitzgerald, J.T., Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence, SBLDS, 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).
- Fitzmyer, J.A., 'Aramaic Epistolography', Semeia 22 (1981), pp. 25-57.
- 'Some Notes on Aramaic Epistolography', JBL 93 (1974), pp. 201-25.
- Forbes, C., 'Comparision, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric', NTS 32 (1986), pp. 1-30.
- Fowler, R., Linguistics and the Novel, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1977).
- Linguistic Criticism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- Fowler, R.M., 'Who is "the Reader" in Reader Response Criticism', Semeia 31 (1985), pp. 5-23.
- France, R.T., 'Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples', in New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, ed. I.H. Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 252-81.
- Francis, F.O., 'The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John', ZNW 61 (1970), pp. 110-26.
- Freedman, R., 'Intentionality and the Literary Object', Contemporary Literature 17 (1976), pp. 430-52.
- Freund, E., The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1987).
- Friedrich, G., 'Lohmeyer's These über "Das paulinische Briefpräskript" kritisch beleuchtet', ThLZ 81 (1955), pp. 342-46.
- Funk, R.W., Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).
- 'The Form and Structure of II and III John', JBL 86 (1967), pp. 424-30.
- 'The Apostolic Parousia: Form and Significance', in Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, eds. W.R. Farmer, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 249-68.

- Gadamer, H.-G., Truth and Method, trans W. Glen-Doepel, eds. J. Cumming and J.G. Barden (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975).
- Gamble, H., The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism, Studies and Documents, 42 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).
- Geissner, H., 'Rhetorik und Hermeneutik', Rhetorik 4 (1985), pp. 85-100.
- Gilchrist, J.M., 'Paul and the Corinthians: The Sequence of Letters and Visits', JSNT 34 (1988), pp. 47-69.
- Goulder, M., 'The Pauline Epistles', in The Literary Guide to the Bible, eds. R. Alter and F. Kermode (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 479-502.
- Greenwood, D., 'Rhetorical Criticism and Formgeschichte: Some Methodological Considerations', JBL 89 (1970), pp. 418-26.
- Grosheide, F.W., Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953).
- Habermas, J., 'On Systematically Distorted Communication', in Hermeneutical Inquiry, Vol. 2: The Interpretation of Existence, AARSR, 44, ed. D.E. Klemm (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 209-19.
- , 'Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence', in Hermeneutical Inquiry, Vol. 2: The Interpretation of Existence, AARSR, 44, ed. D.E. Klemm (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 221-34.
- , 'On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality', in The Hermeneutics Reader, ed. K. Mueller-Vollmer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 294-319.
- Hamerton-Kelly, R.G., 'A Girardian Interpretation of Paul: Rivalry, Mimesis and Victimage in the Corinthian Correspondence', Semeia 33 (1985), pp. 65-81.
- Hansen, G.W., Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts (JSNTSup, 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).
- Hartin, P.J. and Petzer, J.H., Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament, New Testament Tools and Studies, 15 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991).
- Hartman, L., 'On Reading Others' Letters', HTR 79 (1986), pp. 137-46.



- Hasler, V., 'Das Evangelium des Paulus in Korinth  
Erwägungen zur Hermeneutik', NTS 30 (1984), pp. 109-29.
- Hawkes, T., Structuralism and Semiotics, New Accents  
(London: Methuen, 1977).
- Hayes, J.H. and Holladay, C.R., Biblical Exegesis: A  
Beginner's Handbook (London: SCM, 1987, 2nd. ed.).
- Hengel, M., Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their  
Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic  
Period, 2 Vols., trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia:  
Fortress, 1981).
- Jews Greeks and Barbarians, trans. J. Bowden (London:  
SCM, 1980).
- 'Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity', in  
Earliest Christianity, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM,  
1986), pp. 3-68.
- Héring, J., The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the  
Corinthians, trans. A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock  
(London: Epworth Press, 1962).
- Hermeren, G., 'Intention and Interpretation in Literary  
Criticism', New Literary History 7 (1975), pp. 57-82.
- Hernadi, P., 'Literary Theory: A Compass for Critics',  
Critical Inquiry 3 (1976), pp. 369-86.
- Hester, J.D., 'Placing the Blame: The Presence of  
Epideictic in Galatians 1 and 2', in Persuasive  
Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor  
of George A. Kennedy, ed. D.F. Watson (JSNTSup, 50;  
Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), pp. 282-307.
- Hock, R.F., The Social Context of Paul's Ministry  
(Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).
- Hodgson, R., 'Paul the Apostle and First Century  
Tribulation Lists', ZNW 74 (1983), pp. 59-80.
- Hofman, K.M., Philema Hagion, Beiträge zur Förderung  
christlicher Theologie 2, 38 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann,  
1938).
- Holmberg, B., Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in  
the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline  
Epistles (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).
- Horsley, R.A., 'The Background of the Confessional  
Formula in 1 Kor. 8.6', ZNW 69 (1978), pp. 130-35.
- '"How can some of you say there is no resurrection of  
the dead?" Spiritual Elitism in Corinth', NovT 20  
(1978), pp. 203-31.

- 'Pneumatikos versus Psychikos: Distinctions of Status Among the Corinthians', HTR 69 (1976), pp. 269-88.
- 'Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth', CBO 39 (1977), pp. 224-39.
- 'Gnosis in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 8.1-6', NTS 27 (1980), pp. 32-51.
- Howard, G. and Shelton, J.C., 'The Bar-Kokhba Letters and Palestinian Greek', Israel Exploration Journal 23 (1973), pp. 101-02.
- Hoy, D., The Critical Circle: Literature, History, and Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
- Hübner, H., 'Der Galaterbrief und das Verhältnis von antiker Rhetorik und Epistolographie', TLZ 109 (1984), pp. 241-50.
- Hughes, F.W., Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians (JSNTSup, 30; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).
- Hurd, J.C., The Origin of 1 Corinthians (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983 reprint).
- 'Pauline Chronology and Pauline Theology', in Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, ed. W.R. Farmer, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 225-48.
- Hyde, M.J. and Smith, C.R., 'Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen But Unobserved Relationship', Quarterly Journal of Speech 65 (1979), pp. 347-63.
- Iser, W., The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978).
- Jakobson, R., 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics', in Style in Language, ed. T.A. Seboek (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), pp. 350-77.
- Jameson, F., The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).
- Jasper, D., The Study of Literature and Religion: An Introduction (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989).
- Rhetoric, Power and Community: An Exercise in Reserve (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993).



- ' "In the sermon which I have just completed, wherever I said Aristotle, I meant Saint Paul" ', in The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility, ed. M. Warner (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 133-52.
- Jeanrond, W.G., Text and Interpretation as Categories of Theological Thinking, trans. T.J. Wilson (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988).
- Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance (New York: Crossroad, 1991).
- Jeremias, J., 'Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen', ZNW 49 (1958), pp. 145-56.
- Jervis, L.A., The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation (JSNTSup, 55; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).
- Jewett, R., The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).
- 'The Form and Function of the Homiletic Benediction', ATR 51 (1969), pp. 18-34.
- Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings, AGJU 10 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971).
- Jobling D., and Pippin, T., eds., Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts, Semeia, 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).
- Johanson, B.C., To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians, Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series 16 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987).
- Johnson, L.T., The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation (London: SCM, 1986).
- Karon, L.A., 'Presence in the New Rhetoric', in The New Rhetoric of Chaim Perelman: Statement and Response, ed. R.D. Dearin (Lanham: University Press, 1989).
- Käsemann, E., New Testament Questions of Today, trans. W.J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969).
- Commentary on Romans, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
- Keck, L.E., Paul and His Letters, Proclamation Commentaries (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988, 2nd ed.).

- Kebler, W., The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).
- Kennedy, G.A., New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of N.C. Press, 1984).
- Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times (Chapel Hill: University of N.C. Press, 1980).
- ' "Truth" and "Rhetoric" in the Pauline Epistles', in The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility, ed. M. Warner (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 195-202.
- Kessler, M., 'An Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: Prolegomena', Semitics 7 (1980), pp. 1-27.
- 'A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism', Semitics 4 (1974), pp. 22-36.
- Kikawanda, I.M., 'Some Proposals for the Definition of Rhetorical Criticism', Semitics 5 (1977), pp. 67-91.
- Kim, C.-H., Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation, SBLDS, 4 (Missoula: SBL, 1972).
- 'Index of Greek Papyrus Letters', Semeia 22 (1981), pp. 107-12
- 'The Papyrus Invitation', JBL 94 (1975), pp. 391-402.
- Kim, S., The Origin of Paul's Gospel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).
- Kirk, J.A., 'Apostleship Since Rengstorf: Towards a Synthesis', NTS 21 (1974/75), pp. 249-64.
- Klassen, W., 'The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament: An Example of Social Boundry Lines', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 122-35.
- Klauck, H.-J., 1 Korintherbrief, NEB 7 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1984).
- 'Gemeindestrukturen im ersten Korintherbrief', Bibel und Kirche 40 (1985), pp. 9-15.
- Kloppenborg, J., 'An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula in 1 Corinthians 15.3b-5 in Light of Some Recent Literature', CBQ 40 (1978), pp. 351-67.
- Koester, H., Introduction to the New Testament. 2 Vols (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).



- Koskenniemi, H., Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr., Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia, Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae 102,2 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1956).
- Krentz, E., The Historical-Critical Method, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
- Kramer, W., Christ, Lord, Son of God, SBT, 50, trans. B. Hardy (London: SCM, 1966).
- Kress, G. and Hodge, R., Language as Ideology (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).
- Kümmel, W.G., Introduction to the New Testament, rev. ed., trans. H.C. Kee (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975).
- LaFargue, M., 'Are Texts Determinate? Derrida, Barth and the Role of the Biblical Scholar', HTR 81 (1988), pp. 341-57.
- Lambrecht, J., 'Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament', Bijdragen 50 (1989), pp. 245-48.
- Lampe, P., 'Theological Wisdom and the "Word about the Cross": The Rhetorical Scheme in 1 Corinthians 1-4', Int 44 (1990), pp. 117-31.
- Lang, F., Die Briefe an die Korinther, NTD 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).
- , 'Die Gruppen in Korinth nach 1 Korinther 1-4', Theologische Beiträge 14 (1983), pp. 68-79.
- Larsson, E., 'Die paulinischen Schriften als Quellen zur Geschichte des Urchristentums', Studia Theologica 37 (1983), pp. 33-53.
- Lausberg, H., Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik, 2 Vols. (Münich: Hueber, 1960).
- Leith, D. and Myerson, G., The Power of Address: Explorations in Rhetoric (London: Routledge, 1989).
- Lewis, N., Life in Egypt Under Roman Rule (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).
- Lieu, J.M., '"Grace to You and Peace": The Apostolic Greeting', BJRL 68 (1985), pp. 162-78.
- Lifshitz, B., 'Papyrus grecs du désert de Juda', Aegyptus 42 (1962), pp. 240-58.
- Lightfoot, J.B., Notes on Epistles of Paul, ed. J.R. Harmer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1895, 1980 reprint).

- Lindemann, A., 'Paulus and die korinthische Eschatologie', NTS 37 (1991), pp. 373-399.
- Litfin, D., St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric, SNTSMS 79 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Lohmeyer, E., 'Problem paulinischer Theologie I: Briefliche Grussüberschriften', ZNW 26 (1927), pp. 158-73.
- Longenecker, R.N., Galatians, WBC, 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990).
- 'On the Form, Function, and Authority of the New Testament Letters', in Scripture and Truth, eds. D.A. Carson and J.D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).
- 'Ancient Amanuenses and the Pauline Epistles', in New Dimensions in New Testament Study, ed. R.N. Longenecker and M.C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 281-97
- 'On Ascertaining Paul's Theology in 1 Corinthians: A Response to Victor Paul Furnish' (Unpublished SBL Paper, Pauline Theology Group, 1989).
- Lüdemann, G., Paul Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology (London: SCM, 1984).
- Lyons, G., Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding, SBLDS, 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).
- McDonald, J.I.H., 'Rhetorical Issues and Rhetorical Strategy in Luke 10.25-37 and Acts 10.1-11.18', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 59-65.
- McGuire, M., 'The Structural Study of Speech', in Explorations in Rhetoric, ed. R.E. McKerrow (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1982).
- McKenzie, S.L. and Haynes, S.R., To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993).
- McKerrow, R.E., ed., Explorations in Rhetoric (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1982).
- McKnight, E.V., Post-Modern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-Response Criticism (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988).



- Mack, B.L., Rhetoric and the New Testament, Guides to Biblical Scholarship, New Testament Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990).
- Mailloux, S., 'Learning to Read: Interpretation and Reader Response Criticism', Studies in Literary Imagination 12 (1979), pp. 93-108.
- Malan, F.S., 'The Use of the Old Testament in 1 Corinthians', Neot 14 (1981), pp. 134-70
- Malherbe, A., Ancient Epistolary Theorists, SBL Sources for Biblical Study, 19 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook, Library of Early Christianity, 4 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Social Aspects of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983, 2nd ed.).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Beasts at Ephesus', JBL 87 (1968), pp. 71-80.
- Marshall, I.H., 'Historical Criticism', in New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, ed. I.H. Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 126-38.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1 and 2 Thessaloinians, NCB (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Last Supper and Lord's Supper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
- Marshall, P., Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians, WUNT 2,23 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Hybrists Not Gnostics in Corinth', SBLSP 1 (1984), pp. 275-87.
- Martin, R.P., The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in 1 Corinthians 12-15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).
- Mayor, J.B., The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan, 1887, 2nd ed.).
- Meecham, H.G., Light from Ancient Letters (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923).
- Meeks, W.A., The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).
- Merklein, H., 'Die Einheitlichkeit des ersten Korintherbriefs', ZNW 17 (1984), pp. 153-83.

- Metzger, B.M., A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (United Bible Societies, 1971).
- Minear, P.S., 'Christ and the Congregation: 1 Corinthians 5-6', RevExp 80 (1983), pp. 341-50.
- Mitchell, A.C., 'Rich and Poor in the Courts of Corinth: Litigiousness and Status in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 562-86.
- Mitchell, M.M., Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie, 28 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991).
- 'Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians', NovT 31 (1989), pp. 229-56.
- 'New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus', JBL 111 (1992), pp. 641-62.
- Mitchell, W.J.T., ed., On Narrative (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
- Moberly, R.W., At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34 (JSOTSup, 22; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).
- Moffatt, J., The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938).
- Moore, S.D., Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
- Morgan, R. with Barton, J., Biblical Interpretation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- Morris, L., The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, TNTC (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1958).
- Moule, C.F.D., The Origin of Christology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
- The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, CGTC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).
- The Birth of the New Testament, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982, 3rd ed.).
- 'A Reconsideration of the Context of Maranatha', NTS 6 (1959/60), pp. 307-10.



- \_\_\_\_\_An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, 2nd ed.).
- Moulton, J.H., Prolegomena: Vol. 1 of A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906, 3rd ed.).
- Mounce, R.H., 'Continuity of Primitive Tradition', Int 13 (1959), pp. 417-24.
- Muilenburg, J., 'A Study in Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style', Vetus Testamentum Supplement 1 (1953), pp. 97-111.
- \_\_\_\_\_'The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66', in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon), pp. 5:681-773.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Form Criticism and Beyond', JBL 88 (1969), pp. 1-18.
- Mullins, T.Y., 'Petition as a Literary Form', NovT 5 (1962), pp. 46-54.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Disclosure: A Literary Form in the New Testament', NovT 7 (1964), pp. 44-50.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Greeting as a New Testament Form', JBL 87 (1968), pp. 418-26.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Formulas in New Testament Epistles', JBL 91 (1972), pp. 380-90.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Ascription as a Literary Form', NTS 19 (1972/73), pp. 194-205.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Visit Talk in New Testament Letters', CBQ 35 (1973), pp. 350-58.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Topos as a New Testament Form', JBL 99 (1980), pp. 541-47.
- Munck, J., Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, trans. F. Clarke (Atlanta: John Knox, 1959).
- Murphy, J.J., ed., A Short History of Writing Instruction (Davis: Hermagoras, 1990).
- Murphy-O'Connor, J., St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology, GNS, 6 (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983).
- \_\_\_\_\_'Baptized for the Dead" (1 Cor., XV.29): A Corinthian Slogan?', RB 88 (1981), pp. 532-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6.12-20', CBQ 40 (1978), pp. 391-96.

- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Tradition and Redaction in 1 Cor. 15.3-7', CBO 43 (1981), pp. 582-89.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Interpolations in 1 Corinthians', CBO 48 (1986), pp. 81-94.
- Nash, W., Rhetoric: The Wit of Persuasion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- Nelson, J.S., Megill, A. and McCloskey D.N., The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).
- Nickle, K.F., The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy (London: SCM, 1966).
- Nida, E.A., Louw, J.P., Snyman, A.H., Cronje, J.W., Style and Discourse: With Special Reference to the Text of the Greek New Testament (Cape Town: Bible Society, 1983).
- Neumann, K.J., 'Paul's Use of Authority and Persuasion in the Corinthian Letters', Consensus 5 (1979), pp. 15-23.
- O'Brien, P.T., Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul (NovTSup, 49; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977).
- Olbricht, T.H., 'An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians', in Greeks, Romans and Christians: Essays in Honor of A.J. Malherbe, ed. D. Balch, E. Ferguson and W. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 216-37.
- Olson, S.N., 'Epistolary Uses of Expressions of Self-Confidence', JBL 103 (1984), pp. 585-97.
- Ong, W.J., 'The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction', PMLA 90 (1975), pp. 9-21.
- Orr, W.F. and Walther, J.A., 1 Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes and Commentary, AB, 32 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976).
- Osborne, R.E., 'Paul and the Wild Beasts', JBL 85 (1966), pp. 225-30.
- Pagels, E.H., The Gnostic Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
- Painter, J., 'Paul and the Πνευματικοί at Corinth', in Paul and Paulinism, eds. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 237-50.
- Palmer, R.E., Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969).



- Pardee, D., Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters: A Study Edition, SBL Sources for Biblical Study, 15 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).
- 'An Overview of Ancient Hebrew Epistolography', JBL 97 (1978), pp. 321-46.
- Parry, R.St.J., The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, CGT (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916).
- Pascal, R., 'Narrative Fictions and Reality: A Comment on Frank Kermode's The Sense of an Ending', Novel 11 (1977), pp. 40-50.
- Patrick, D. and Scult, A., Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation (JSOTSup, 82; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).
- Pearson, B.A., The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians, SBLDS, 12 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973).
- Perelman, Ch. and Olbrechts-Tyteca, L., The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, trans. by J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1969).
- Perelman, Ch., The Realm of Rhetoric, trans. by W. Kluback (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1982).
- Perry, M., 'Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings', Poetics Today 1 (1979), pp. 35-64.
- Petersen, N.R., Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).
- Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).
- Plank, K.A., 'Resurrection Theology: The Corinthian Controversy Reexamined', Perspectives in Religious Studies 8 (1981), pp. 41-54.
- Pogoloff, S.M., Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians, SBLDS, 134 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).
- Poland, L.M., Literary Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics: A Critique of Formalist Approaches, AARAS, 48 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985).
- 'The Bible and the Rhetorical Sublime', in The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility, ed. M. Warner (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 29-47.

- Polhill, J.B., 'The Wisdom of God and Factionalism: 1 Corinthians 1-4', RevExp 80 (1983), pp. 325-39.
- Porter, S.E., 'The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).
- Idioms of the Greek New Testament, Biblical Greek Languages, Greek 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).
- 'Why Hasn't Reader-Response Criticism Caught on in New Testament Studies?', Literature and Theology 4 (1990), pp. 278-92.
- 'Reader-Response Criticism and New Testament Study: A Response to A.C. Thiselton's New Horizons in Hermeneutics', Literature and Theology 8 (1994), pp. 96-102.
- The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays (JSNTSup, 60; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).
- Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood, Studies in Biblical Greek, 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).
- Porter, S.E., and Reed, J.T., 'Greek Grammar since BDF: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis', Filología Neotestamentaria 4 (1991), pp. 156-63.
- Prince, G., A Grammar of Stories (The Hague: Mouton, 1973).
- Prior, M., Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy (JSNTSup, 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).
- Probst, H., Paulus und der Brief: Die Rhetorik des antiken Briefes als Form der paulinischen Korintherkorrespondenz (1 Kor 8-10), WUNT 2,45 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991).
- Reed, J.T., 'Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).
- Richards, E., The Secretary in the Letters of Paul, WUNT 2,42 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1990).
- Ricoeur, P., 'The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation', Philosophy Today 17 (1973), pp. 129-41.



- \_\_\_\_\_'The Narrative Function', Semeia 13 (1978), pp. 177-202.
- Rigaux, B., The Letters of St. Paul: Modern Studies, trans. S. Yonick (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968).
- Robbins, V.K., Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).
- Robbins, V.K. and Patton, J.H., 'Rhetorical and Biblical Criticism', Quarterly Journal of Speech 66 (1980), pp. 327-350.
- Roberts, J.H., 'Transitional Techniques to the Letter Body in the Corpus Paulinum', in A South African Perspective on the New Testament, eds J.H. Petzer and P.J. Hartin (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), pp. 187-201.
- Roberts, R.H. and Good, J.M.M., The Recovery of Rhetoric: Persuasive Discourse and Disciplinarity in the Human Sciences (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1993).
- Robertson, A. and Plummer, A., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911).
- \_\_\_\_\_'The Historicality of Biblical Language', in The Old Testament and Christian Faith, ed. B.W. Anderson (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 132-49.
- Robinson, J.A.T., 'Traces of a Liturgical Sequence in 1 Cor. 16.20-24', JTS n.s. 4 (1953), pp. 38-41.
- Robinson, J.M., 'Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Frühchristentums', in Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen, ed. W. Eltester and F.H. Kettler, BZNW, 30 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), pp. 194-235.
- Robinson, J.M. and Cobb, J.B., The New Hermeneutic, New Frontiers in Theology, 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).
- Roetzel, C. 'The Judgment Form in Paul's Letters', JBL 88 (1969), pp. 305-12.
- \_\_\_\_\_The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context (London: SCM, 1982, 2nd ed.).
- \_\_\_\_\_'1 Thessalonians 5.12-28: A Case Study', SBLSP 108 (1972), pp. 2:367-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_Judgment in the Community (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972).
- Roller, O., Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe, BWANT 58 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933).

- Sanders, B., 'Imitating Paul: 1 Cor. 4.16', HTR 74 (1981), pp. 353-63.
- Sanders, J.T., 'The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus', JBL 81 (1962), pp. 348-62.
- Schenk, W., 'Der 1. Korintherbrief als Briefsammlung', ZNW 60 (1969), pp. 219-43.
- Schmithals, W., Paul and the Gnostics, trans. by J.E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972).
- Gnosticism in Corinth, trans. by J.E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971).
- Schnackenburg, R., 'Apostles Before and During Paul's Time', in Apostolic History and the Gospel, ed. W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 287-303.
- Schnider, F. and Stenger, W., Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular, New Testament Tools and Studies, 11 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987).
- Schrage, W., Der erste Brief an die Korinther, EKK 7/1 (Zürich: Braunschweig: 1991).
- Schubert, P., Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings, BZNW 20 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939).
- 'Form and Function of the Pauline Letters', Journal of Religion 19 (1939), pp. 365-77.
- Schulz, S., 'Maranatha and Kyrios Jesus', ZNW 53 (1962), pp. 125-44.
- Schütz, J.H., Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority, SNTSMS, 26 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
- Searle, J.R., Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
- Selden, R., A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985).
- Senft, C., La première Epître de saint-Paul aux Corinthiens, CNT 7 (Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1979).
- Shanor, J., 'Paul as Master Builder: Construction Terms in First Corinthians', NTS 34 (1988), pp. 461-71.
- Shaw, G., The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament (London: SCM, 1983).



- Siebert, F., Argumentation bei Paulus: gezeigt an Röm 9-11, WUNT 34 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Drei hellenistisch-jüdische Predigten (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980).
- Sloan, T.O. and Perelman, Ch., 'Rhetoric', Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., p. 799.
- Smit, J., 'The Letter to Galatians: A Deliberative Speech', NTS (1989), pp. 1-26.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Argument and Genre of 1 Corinthians 12-14', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 211-30.
- Smit, J.F.M., 'Two Puzzles: 1 Corinthians 12.31 and 13.3: A Rhetorical Solution', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 246-64.
- Snyman, A.H., 'On Studying the Figures (schēmata) in the New Testament', Bib 69 (1988), pp. 93-107.
- South, J.T., 'A Critique of the "Curse/Death" Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5.1-8', NTS 39 (1993), pp. 539-61.
- Spencer, R.A., ed., Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Literary Criticism, Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1980).
- Spicq, C., 'Comment Comprendre  $\phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$  dans 1 Cor. xvi.22?', NovT 1 (1956), pp. 200-04.
- Stacy, R.H., Defamiliarization in Language and Literature (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977).
- Stambaugh, J. and Balch, D., The Social World of the First Christians (London: SPCK, 1986).
- Stamps, D.L., 'Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetoric of New Testament Criticism', Literature and Theology 6 (1992), pp. 268-79.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Interpreting the Language of St. Paul', in Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression and Interpretation, ed. D. Jasper (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 21-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation: The Entextualization of the Situation in New Testament Epistles', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 193-210.

- Standaert, B., 'La Rhétorique Ancienne dans Saint Paul', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven : Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 78-92.
- Stanley, D., 'Become Imitators of Me: The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition', Bib 40 (1959), pp. 859-77.
- Sternberg, M., The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading, Indiana Literary Biblical Series (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).
- Stirewalt, M.L., Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography, SBL Resources for Biblical Study, 27 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).
- , 'The Form and Function of the Greek Letter-Essay', in The Romans Debate, Revised and Expanded, ed. K.P. Donfried (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 147-71.
- Stowers, S.K., Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity, Library of Early Christianity, 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).
- , The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans, SBLDS, 57 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).
- Suleiman, S.R., 'Introduction: Varieties of Audience Oriented Criticism', in The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation, eds. S.R. Suleiman and I. Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).
- Suleiman, S.R. and Crosman, I., eds., The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).
- Sumney, J.L., Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians (JSNTSup, 40; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).
- Taatz, I., Frühjüdische Briefe: Die paulinische Briefe im Rahmen der offiziellen religiösen Briefe des Fröjudentums, NTOA, 16 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).
- Talbert, C.H., Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians (New York: Crossroad, 1987).
- Taylor, M.C., 'Deconstruction: What's the Difference?', Soundings 66 (1983), pp. 387-403.
- Thackeray, H.St.J., A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909).



- Theissen, G., The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, ed. and trans. J.H. Schütz (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982).
- Thiselton, A.C., 'Realized Eschatology at Corinth', NTS 24 (1977/78), pp. 510-526.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Two Horizons (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
- Thraede, K., Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Briefftopik, Zetemata, 48 (Münich: Beck, 1970).
- Thurén, L., The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter: with Special Regard to Ambiguous Expressions (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1990).
- Thyen, H., Der Stil der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen Homilie, FRLANT, 47 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955).
- Tompkins, J.P., ed., Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).
- Tuckett, C., Reading the New Testament: Methods of Interpretation (London: SPCK, 1987).
- \_\_\_\_\_, '1 Corinthians and Q', JBL 102 (1983), pp. 607-19.
- Turner, E.G., Greek Papyri: An Introduction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).
- Turner, N., Syntax, vol. 3 of A Grammar of New Testament Greek, by J.H. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963).
- Unnik, W.C. van, 'Jesus: Anathama or Kyrios (1 Cor. 12:33)?', in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, ed. B. Lindars and S.S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 113-26.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Dominus Vobiscum: The Background of a Liturgical Formula', in New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson, ed. A.J.B. Higgins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 270-72.
- Vanhoye, A., 'Personalité de Paul et Exégèse Paulinienne', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL 73; Leuven : Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 3-15.
- Via, D.O., The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).
- Vickers, B., In Defence of Rhetoric (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
- Vielhauer, P., 'Paulus and die Kephaspartei in Korinth', NTS 21 (1975), pp. 341-52.

- Violi, P., 'Letters', in Discourse and Literature, Critical Theory, 3., ed. T.A. van Dijk (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1985), pp. 149-67.
- Voelz, J.W., 'The Language of the New Testament', ANRW II, 25.2, pp. 893-977.
- Vorster, J.N., 'Toward an Interactional Model for the Analysis of Letters', Neot 24 (1990), pp. 118-25.
- Wanamaker, C.A., The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).
- Warner, M., ed., The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility, Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature (London: Routledge, 1990).
- Watson, D.F., Invention, Arrangement and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter, SBLDS, 104 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).
- , ed., Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy (JSNTSup, 50; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).
- , '1 Corinthians 10.23-11.1 in the Light of Greco-Roman Rhetoric: The Role of Rhetorical Questions', JBL 108 (1989), pp. 301-18.
- , 'Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15', in Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, eds. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (JSNTSup, 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 231-49.
- Watson, D.F. and Hauser, A.J., Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method, Biblical Interpretation, 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).
- Wedderburn, A.J.M., 'The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV', NovT 23 (1981), pp. 229-41.
- , 'Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases "in Christ" and "with Christ"', JSNT 25 (1985), pp. 83-97.
- Weima, J.A.D., The Pauline Letter Closings: Analyses and Hermeneutical Significance (JSNTSup, 101; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).
- Weiss, J., Der erste Korintherbrief, MeyerK 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910, 9th ed.).
- Welborn, L.L., 'On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics', JBL 106 (1987), pp. 320-46.



- Wellek, R. and Warren, A., Theory of Literature (Handsworth: Penguin Books, 1963, 3rd ed.).
- Welles, C.B., Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934).
- White, C., ed., Speech Act Theory and Biblical Criticism, Semeia, 41 (Decatur: Scholars Press, 1988).
- White, H., 'The Narrativization of Real Events', in On Narrative, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), pp. 249-54.
- White, J.L., 'Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition', CBQ 45 (1983), pp. 433-44.
- The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle, SBLDS 2 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972).
- 'The Structural Analysis of Philemon: A Point of Departure in the Formal Analysis of the Pauline Letter', in SBLSP 1 (1971), pp. 1-47.
- 'New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography', in ANRW II. 25.2, ed. H. Temporini and W. Hasse (Berline: De Gruyter, 1984), pp. 1730-56.
- Light from Ancient Letters, Foundations and Facets: New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).
- 'Epistolary Formulas and Cliches in Greek Papyrus Letters', SBLSP 2 (1978), pp. 289-319.
- The Form and Structure of the Official Petition, SBLDS, 5 (Missoula: SBL, 1972).
- 'The Ancient Epistolography Group in Retrospect', Semeia 22 (1981), pp. 1-14.
- 'Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter', JBL 90 (1971), pp. 91-97.
- 'Ancient Greek Letters', in Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres, SBL Sources for Biblical Studies, 21, ed. D.E. Aune (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 85-105.
- 'The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition Third Century B.C.E. to Third Century C.E.', Semeia 22 (1981), pp. 89-106.
- White, L.M., ed., Social Networks in the Early Christian Environment: Issues and Methods for Social History, Semeia, 56 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

- Wickert, U., 'Einheit und Eintracht der Kirche im Präskript des ersten Korintherbriefes', ZNW 50 (1959), pp. 73-82.
- Wilckens, U., Weisheit und Torheit, BHT 26 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1959).
- Wilder, A.N., Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel (London: SCM, 1964; and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971 reprint).
- Wiles, G.P., Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul, SNTSMS, 24 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).
- Willis, W.L., Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, SBLDS, 69 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985).
- Wills, L., 'The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity', HTR 77 (1984), pp. 277-99.
- Wilson, A., 'The Pragmatics of Politeness and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter to Philemon', JSNT 48 (1992), pp. 107-19.
- Wilson, J.H., 'The Corinthians Who Say Their is No Resurrection of the Dead', ZNW 59 (1968), pp. 90-107.
- Wilson, R. McL., 'How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?', NTS 19 (1972/73), pp. 65-74.
- , 'Gnosis at Corinth', in Paul and Paulinism, ed. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 102-14.
- Wimbush, V.L., Paul the Worldly Ascetic: Response to the World and Self-Understanding according to 1 Corinthians 7 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).
- Winguist, C.E., ed., Text and Textuality, Semeia, 40 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).
- Winter, B.W., 'The Lord's Supper at Corinth: An Alternative Reconstruction', Reformed Theological Review 37 (1978), pp. 73-82.
- Winter, J.G., 'In the Service of Rome: Letters from the Michigan Collection of Papyri', Classical Philology 22 (1927), pp. 237-56.
- Wire, A.C., The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul's Rhetoric (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990).



- Wolff, C., Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther,  
THKNT 7/2 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1975).
- Wuellner, W., 'Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation',  
in Early Christian Literature and the Classical  
Intellectual Tradition, Théologie Historique 53, ed.  
by W.R. Schoedel and R. Wilken (Paris: Éditions  
Beauchesne, 1979), pp. 177-88.
- 'Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An  
Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over  
Romans', CBQ 38 (1976), pp. 330-51.
- 'Haggadic Homily Genre in 1 Corinthians 1-3', JBL 89  
(1970), pp. 199-204.
- 'Tradition and Interpretation of the "Wise-Powerful-  
Noble" Triad in 1 Cor. 1.26', Studia Evangelica 7  
(1982), pp. 557-62.
- 'Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?', CBQ 49  
(1987), pp. 448-63.
- 'Paul as Pastor: The Function of Rhetorical Questions  
in First Corinthians', in L'Apôtre Paul: Personalité,  
Style et Conception du Ministère, ed. A. Vanhoye (BETL  
73; Leuven : Leuven University Press, 1986), pp. 46-  
77.
- 'Hermeneutics and Rhetorics: From "Truth and Method"  
to "Truth and Power"', Scriptura S, 3 (1989), pp. 1-  
54.
- 'The Rhetorical Structure of Luke 12 in its Wider  
Context', Neot 22 (1989), pp. 283-310.
- 'Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture  
Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John  
11', in Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the  
Criticism of the New Testament, New Testament Tools  
and Studies, 15, eds. P.J. Hartin and J.H. Petzer  
(Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 171-85.
- 'The Rhetorical Genre of Jesus' Sermon in Luke 12.1-  
13.9', in Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New  
Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy, ed.  
D.F. Watson (JSNTSup, 50; Sheffield: JSOT Press,  
1991), pp. 93-118.
- Yadin, Y., Bar-Kokhba (Jerusalem: Weidenfeld & Nicolson,  
1971).
- Zerwick, M., Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples, trans.  
J. Smith (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici,  
1963).
- Ziesler, J., Pauline Christianity, Oxford Bible Series  
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, rev. ed.).

